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A HAPPY AGREEMENT

Our island defences have stood the test of another week of incessant attack from the air. While we face the next phase of the war with cautious confidence, the news from America opens up a long prospect of hope. Seldom in the history of two democracies, each jealous of its right to criticise, has a friendly arrangement been received with equal enthusiasm on both sides of the Atlantic. It is not a business deal, but an imaginative agreement, born out of consciousness of a common cause. Each nation spontaneously recognises that now and in the future it needs and will need the other. From that premise Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt have drawn some practical conclusions. There will be others as the months and years go on. The fact is that the defences of the United States and the British Commonwealth are now in Mr. Churchill's phrase "somewhat mixed up." Mr. Roosevelt has taken Canada under his wing, and Mr. Churchill with both hands has turned the British West Indies into outworks for the defence of the Panama Canal. The United States acquires all these sites for the needs of its navy and air-force without so much as a pepper-corn rent. In return it freely makes over to us fifty serviceable destroyers that may have a present value of some £20,000,000. The governing idea of the whole arrangement is revealed with engaging simplicity in the pledge that America sought and Britain gave. Not even if we should be overwhelmed in this island, will we scuttle or surrender the fleet that banishes the Nazis from the Atlantic and upholds the Monroe Doctrine.

What has been done with an almost boyish spontaneity this week is, however, one of the most far-reaching commitments in world-history. America acquires these numerous and far-flung naval stations and airports on a lease that runs for 99 years. In the cold-blooded hemisphere that we inhabit pacts of friendship or alliance commonly run for ten years. In this case there is not on paper even the rough draft of anything that distantly resembles an alliance. None the less the implications in these leases are morally and even legally hardly less binding. As we read them, they imply for three generations a parallelism in British and American foreign policy so close that one of us could hardly be neutral if the other were at war. The sovereignty of these bases will not change hands. It follows that when America uses them against an enemy, her belligerent activities will be conducted on British territory. The case is only a little less clear the other way round. If we were at war, our enemy would be within his rights in blockading or attacking American leasehold bases which are still at law British possessions. It wants no abnormal quickness of wit to see these implications in this week's arrangement, and we must assume that both the Foreign Office and the State Department have seen them. For our part we are content that it should be so. We are, then, brothers in arms, in war as in peace, for a century to come. This, is, indeed, a miracle of improvisation.

No one on this side is likely to ask pedantic constitutional questions: we all approve what Mr. Churchill has done in a typically Churchillian way. But within two months of an election the President will have to face some nagging. He can quote a precedent from Jefferson's record, but the self-importance of Congress will be sorely wounded, for it was consulted neither over the bases nor over the destroyers. His rival, Mr. Willkie, is in the weak position of approving the arrangement, while he censures Mr. Roosevelt's daring. Our own impression is that this boldness, so far from injuring his chances of re-election, may greatly improve them. American blood is up, as Mr. Tiltman tells us in a lively contribution this week, and we should guess that the average voter cares as little for the *amour propre* of Senators, as he cares for the anachronistic caution of the isolationists. What he needs to face the Nazi threat is what he needed when he confronted the world-slump eight years ago, and that is brave leadership and a strong executive. He has got it in this arrangement that begins to pool our defences for the coming century.

The Air Battle

German raiders have been over every part of this island during the last week. Bombing planes have been accompanied by an equal number of fighters. The primary object of these attacks has been to engage and destroy as many British fighters as possible. An invasion is only possible if our defence fighters can be seriously weakened.

So far there is every indication that, from this point of view, the German aerial invasion has been a failure.

The further objects of the Nazi attack have been to destroy military objectives, to undermine public resistance and hold up the production of this country. No general picture of the amount of damage done can yet be given. It is clear, however, that the damage to factories has been less serious from the point of view of production than the interruptions of work caused by frequent warnings.

In considering remedies for this, night and day have to some extent to be thought of separately. It is much more difficult to go on working through a raid, or even an anticipated raid, by night than by day; and workers on night shift dislike much more being away from wives and families in the hour of danger. It might therefore be wise to begin a change of policy as a daytime measure only, by arranging that factories should work through day raids until the danger becomes really serious. Some people want to apply this change only to male workers, or even only to factories in which women are not employed. But it is surely to be doubted whether women are any less ready than men to take their share of the danger.

Such a policy, of course, implies the provision of adequate shelters. If it is to be extended to night work as well, the shelter provision will have to be raised to a much higher standard, not only in the factories but also for the families of the workers who are asked to remain at work. Hitherto, in most cases, shelters have been constructed as places to hide in, and not as places in which it is possible to get a decent night's rest. It is, however, perfectly plain that work cannot be sustained at a tolerable level if the workers and their families cannot normally rely on a fair night's sleep. This means, in the case of communal shelters, much more space per person and the provision of facilities for sleep. But as this cannot be done speedily on the requisite scale, it also implies a much more extensive use of basements and specially protected rooms in the workers' own homes.

The experience of the last week suggests that both the Anderson and the surface brick shelters are proving more effective than had been expected. Their resistance to blast is about the same, provided that the Anderson shelter is properly covered with earth—which is by no means always the case. In looking ahead, the brick shelter now being provided in many places for the individual family or for groups of families has the obvious advantage over the Anderson shelter that it can be made into a comparatively comfortable little room and presents fewer problems of draining than the Anderson shelter. In any case, the policy of brick shelters must be pursued if only because there is no longer the steel available for shelters of the Anderson type.

The whole question of warning and shelter policy bristles with difficulties. It is highly technical, but the merest layman can see that we cannot allow a comparatively small number of Nazi aeroplanes, flying at a high altitude over the countryside, to keep the whole population awake night after night, nor to prevent the factories from continuing the production of vital necessities. We may hope soon to have a full statement from the Government. Are the present areas over which the warning is given too large? Is it possible to arrange for a system of subsidiary warnings which will send people to shelters when enemy planes are approaching their own districts? Can the problem in factories be solved by the system of watchers which is now in many factories developing by agreement between men and employers? Most important of all, has not the whole public got to face the fact that to say we are "all now in the front line" is only a catch phrase unless it means that we must all discipline ourselves to carry on with necessary work as soldiers, sailors and airmen do during raids, while at the same time taking precautions, as any disciplined force must, to prevent all unnecessary loss of life. We believe that if raids continue month after month the public will demand shelters in which they can sleep in comparative safety whenever they can be excused from duty and warnings which will take them into shelters when the danger is immediate. But they will also grow accustomed to carrying on with their jobs, however frequent the raids.

Japan and Indo-China

The news that the Government of Indo-China has refused the Japanese ultimatum suggests that the Japanese will not have everything their own way in their southwards drive. Their threats to the Dutch East Indies last May were promptly checked by American and then by British warnings. In the case of Indo-China their threats have taken a more definite form, and, until now, it was uncertain whether they would meet any resistance. First they demanded the right to establish naval and military bases and asked for a trade agreement by which Japanese exports could be increased and she could obtain iron and coal and tin and other raw materials. The new Governor, Admiral Decoux, firmer than his predecessor in his attitude to Japan, recently refused permission for a Japanese ship to land 100 men and supplies at Haiphong: he is now said to have assured Chunking that in no circumstances will he permit the passage of Japanese armies or allow the Japanese to establish bases on his territory. Meanwhile the Japanese fleet cruises just outside Indo-China waters, blockading the entire north-east coast. The Chunking Government has made its own position very clear. Chinese forces concentrated on the frontiers of French Indo-China are said to be ready to go into action at a moment's notice, and the Chinese Foreign Minister has stated that "in the event of the actual entry of Japanese armed forces into Indo-China under whatever pretext and under whatever conditions, the Chinese Government will consider it a direct and immediate menace to the security of Chinese territory and will at once adopt measures of self-defence by also despatching armed forces to Indo-China to deal with the situation."

In Occupied Belgium

Two mutually conflicting trends of German policy are now manifesting themselves in occupied Belgium. The clash between them is likely to have important consequences, although for the time being it is helping to deepen the indecision and confusion which exist. Indecision on the Belgian side springs inevitably from the circumstances of the capitulation and from the effect of the French collapse upon the original decision to organise continued resistance from French soil. Since the capitulation King Leopold has been a prisoner in the castle of Laeken. Most of the members of the Government of M. Pierlot are still in Vichy, although three have found their way to London, while the Minister of Transport, who was reported missing after the evacuation of Ostend, appears now to be in occupied territory. Some two million people fled the country during the invasion, but for the most part were caught up by the invading German armies in France and compelled to return, or if they succeeded in reaching unoccupied France are now, under the Pétain rule, in such circumstances as force their gradual return to Belgium. To their disillusion the dealings of a number of prominent Belgian financiers and industrialists with the heads of the German administration in Belgium have added. The situation is thus vastly different from that in 1914–15, and it is impossible to expect, for the time being, anything like the compact resistance to the invader seen in those years. It may be expected, however, that the confusion as to the position and attitude of the Government will shortly end and that gradually also the mass of the people will recover from the shock inflicted upon them by the downfall of France. Meanwhile, German propaganda is exploiting the indecision and bitterness which exist for two different and conflicting ends. On the one hand there is a plan, sponsored by Dr. Schacht, who has many close personal contacts among Belgian industrialists and financiers, for the rehabilitation of Belgian economy as a unit in the new German "economic order." In this unit the Flemish and Walloon interests would remain as economically inter-dependent as formerly. On the other hand, German military leaders are pressing for a separation of the Flemings and the Walloons and a permanent German occupation of the North Sea coast. At present the ideas of the military are prevailing. The military leaders have resurrected from political oblivion Dr. Borms, who was condemned to death in 1919 for his leadership of the Flemish Activist movement during the war, but was eventually imprisoned for ten years instead. Dr. Borms has now once again emerged as the leader of the Flemish Nationalist movement. For the time being his attacks are directed against the French, but primarily against the "volksvreemden," those Belgians regarded as alien in spirit to the Flemish people who must, he demands, be deprived of their leading place in Belgian life. So far there have been no direct attacks on Britain. In his "constructive propaganda" the necessity for a new social order on National Socialist

lines is emphasised. Up to date, however, his propaganda has had, if anything, the reverse effect from that desired, for it has become closely identified in the public mind with the German plan for domination of the North Sea coast, and this the Flemings see only too clearly would involve their land in a future of continuous warfare.

The Offer to India

It is a grave misfortune that the Government's inadequate offer to India has failed, as we feared it would, to unite the leading Indian Parties. Even the Muslim League is critical and has some questions to ask before it will accept office in the Viceroy's enlarged Council. What is much worse, it once more insists on its plan for the partition of India. That is its way of saying that it will not help to work out any scheme for a single Indian Dominion. The Congress Party has also published its mature decision, which is a flat and unqualified rejection. The two points which chiefly weighed with it were, first, that the rather vague offer to enlarge the Viceroy's Council by the admission of representative Indians was hardly even a step towards the formation of a provisional but responsible National Government; secondly, the promise that Indians shall work out their own constitution after the war was vitiated by the undertaking which gave to any considerable minority a veto over the will of the majority. What Congress suspects is that the British Government is still proposing to use the lack of unanimity between the two creeds as a ground for delaying or refusing Indian self-government. There has been in the past only too much ground for this suspicion. But we think Congress to blame for its omission to talk the offer over with the Viceroy. On the other hand, the charge that it is abusing its rights as the majority party seems to us unfounded. Its suggestion was that the provisional administration should be composed on an all-party basis. It is now probable that the Viceroy will proceed to enlarge his Council by placing on it representatives of the various minority parties, and the consequence may well be to aggravate the feuds that curse Indian politics. Though Congress still talks vaguely of resistance in the future, we think resistance, in a serious form, unlikely: Indians want to defeat the Nazis. Our loss is moral: we cannot point to a reconciled India.

Youth in Arms

The decision to enrol certain units of the Home Guards composed entirely of young men, mostly below the age of calling up for the regular forces, is sensible, if only it is rightly applied. It will become very far from sensible if it is used as a reason for curtailing the later stages of secondary education or for depleting still further the already thinned ranks of the Universities. There is much to be said for extending the provision in schools and Universities for part-time military training, chiefly as a substitute for games—always provided that the military exercises are not pushed so far as to make effective education impossible, and of course that proper exemptions are granted to the conscientious objectors and the unfit. But there is nothing at all to be said for any sort of pressure to force young people into the armed forces below the regular age of calling up. It cannot be pretended that the army is short of men: it has, or can easily get from other sources, fully as many as it can hope to train, arm, or accommodate. The Universities have shown during the past year a capacity to adapt their courses successfully to young people who expect to be called away at twenty; and the need for a regular flow of highly educated people into essential civil occupations as well as into the armed forces will hardly be disputed. Youth units of the Home Guards can do excellent service provided they remain really, and not merely nominally, voluntary, and are not allowed to interfere with the continuance of higher education. Unless these points are fully safeguarded, they may come to stand for a serious danger to national efficiency as well as to cultural values.

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A PLAY WITHIN THE PLAY

THE Axis has compelled Rumania to submit to a painful amputation, with the result that the limping victim is now tightly chained to Germany's chariot-wheel. This paradoxical happening requires some explanation and to find it we shall have to travel through several climates of thought. Hitler has secured for himself, as he supposes, the possibility of exploiting undisturbed, the natural riches of Rumania, while he wages his war on the British Empire. The ruling classes of Hungary and Rumania have fought yet another round in the monotonous power-game of the Balkans, waltzing forever round the idea of nationality. But under these surface appearances there lie social realities. There was always in these regions tension between exploited peasants and feudal landlords and now with Russia looking on across the River Pruth, it may take on the aspect of an agrarian revolt. Three motives cross and together they make an exciting play within the play of this war.

In Germany's policy there is nothing obscure. Rumania is her most valuable asset in coping with our blockade, and her purpose is to control and organise this region with a minimum of political disturbance. It means oil, wheat, maize, soya beans and timber: it means railways, pipe lines and river ports; whatever else there may be there is to the Germans a nuisance and an irrelevance. Things were going well for them. King Carol had thrown over Mr. Chamberlain's irresponsible guarantee and had become a helpless client of the Axis. But Russia, by her seizure of Bessarabia, had exposed to all its neighbours the weakness of his ramshackle kingdom. To the Bulgarians it surrendered their slice almost with goodwill, but it talked of defending Transylvania against Hungary. All this meant a risky disturbance of the German plan, which had been to keep the Balkans quiet until the war in the West is over, and then to dictate a final settlement. Mussolini simultaneously was making warlike gestures against Greece, and the bearing of the Turks, with one eye on Downing Street and the Bank and the other fixed on Moscow, gave rise to uneasy conjectures. We do not know what degree of intimate trust Hitler reposes in Stalin at the moment, but it is believed that a great part of the German army, perhaps a hundred divisions, has been concentrated in Poland with a commensurate air force. That may avail to keep the relations between the two partners sweet, but it cannot suit the major purposes of German strategy.

The Hungarians saw their chance and took it. By refusing to wait they compelled Hitler, with Italy's assistance, to dictate on the spot a rough and ready settlement. Hungary has got rather more than half of Transylvania, and by a miracle rare in these latitudes, she appears to be satisfied. For our own part we regard the result with comparative indifference. It is a nice question whether as a political structure Hungary or Rumania is the more reactionary and corrupt. To draw a satisfactory ethnographical frontier is impossible. The Allies could not do it after the last war, and Hitler has not done it to-day.

Three races have to be considered. The Magyars were the landed nobility, scattered with their satellites in small numbers over the whole territory ceded in 1919 to Rumania. They were an oppressive feudal caste which used its Rumanian serfs even worse than Magyar nobles use the peasantry of their own race in Hungary proper. But isolated at the distant eastern end of Transylvania there dwells a compact Magyar population of farmers, known as the Szeklers. There come next the German colonists, Saxons who settled in the thirteenth century in the North, and a more recent colony of Swabians in the South. A stubborn race, they are partly farmers and partly an urban middle-class. Finally, come the Rumanians, slightly more than half the population of Transylvania. They were in the main a submerged and illiterate rural proletariat. But their condition has improved since they came under the Rumanian flag. The Magyar landlords were for the most part expropriated. The Rumanians now had their university, and ran the local administration with little tenderness for the former ruling class. On their side, both Szeklers and Saxons were ill-at-ease under alien rule; for they are proud of their superior culture which links them, whether they be Catholics, Calvinists or Unitarians, with the West. Hitler's Judgment of Solomon has given all the Szeklers back to Hungary, but that is the only merit it can claim. The ceded portion of Transylvania probably contains a bare majority of Rumanians. They cannot hope that the Magyars will show much respect for their language and their schools, and it is possible and even probable that the expropriated Magyar landowners will try to reduce them to serfdom again.

An odd feature of this dictated settlement is that it leaves about two-thirds of the Saxons and all the Swabians within Rumania. It may be Hitler's intention to use this native German minority to run this Danubian colony. Some attempt to exchange populations may follow. That is a counsel of despair, for it assumes that stocks which differ in language and culture cannot contrive to live and work together. But in this case, as so often, the mischief was not primarily racial antagonism but economic exploitation. If that could be ended, a system of cultural autonomy, giving to each race the management of its social services, might suffice within a liberal state to preserve harmony between them. But neither Hungary nor Rumania is likely to become a liberal state without a social upheaval.

The question of to-morrow is whether the Rumanian kingdom can endure this shock. The Magyars will doubtless crush any resistance that their new subjects may offer. The government that has to fear revolt is that of King Carol. This humiliated nation has been mobilised and taxed for a year to resist three amputations which it endured in the end without firing a shot. The king chose to destroy such sham of representative government as it possessed, and he has since allowed every possible combination of magnates, quacks and place-hunters to discredit itself by turns. Who is left? There is General Antonescu, who may be able to control the army. There is the Iron Guard, capable of a kind of brutal audacity and prompt at assassination, but it was the pro-German party. There is Dr. Maniu, the peasants' leader, who alone in this sink of venality enjoys some repute for honesty and principle. But can any individual statesman save a discredited system under an unpopular king who tries to play the autocrat? This social structure lacks solidity. The aristocracy, largely Phanariot Greek by origin, tends to be French in its culture. These absentee landlords have, indeed, partially appeased their peasants by surrendering some of their land, but they still retain too much for safety. Big business, such as it is, has lived by politics and corruption, and is parasitic on foreign capital. The small middle and professional class confesses its weakness by its savage feud against the Jews, whose traditional role was to supply the lack of a *bourgeoisie*.

In such a society, when the ruling class is discredited, the throne immersed in scandal and the army angry and ashamed, a social revolution becomes a possibility. There were signs of communist activity during the savagely repressed riots that accompanied the transfer of Bessarabia to the Soviet Union. We should judge that King Carol and his ministers viewed the loss of territory they have suffered as something less than total disaster, because the Axis offered by way of compensation a guarantee that obviously had Russia in view. But Russia has no further territorial claims to press at Rumania's expense. She is a danger rather because she is the hope of the submerged masses in all this region. It may be that on the plane of power-politics Moscow is interested in the Delta of the Danube, the shores of the Black Sea and the Turkish Straits. But the real strength of the Soviet Union, in the Balkans and indeed in Central Europe, lies in her class appeal to an impoverished peasantry, seconded as in some of these countries it is, by a revival of Panslavist sentiment.

The only safe clue to Stalin's policy is to assume that his tendency to expand the borders of the Union is subordinated to his determination to avoid any major war. He will be slow to foster revolution in Rumania, even if the ground looks tempting, so long as Hitler can afford to keep a hundred divisions as pledges of Russo-German friendship in Poland. Any threat to Rumania's oil-wells, whether by revolution or invasion, would be the signal for German intervention. The Balkan field may be ripe unto harvest, but it is highly unlikely that the Russian sickle will touch it yet. But as the war goes on, if our strength should grow so far that it became impossible to spare a hundred divisions to maintain the Nazi-Russian understanding in Poland, would Stalin's prudence then be equally proof against a promising opportunity? We do not profess to be able to read that riddle, but we are more than ever convinced that the hope of any European war of liberation depends on a prior understanding between Russia and its leaders in the West.

UNCLE SAM IN WONDERLAND

[BY AN AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT]

New York City (by airmail)

WHEN the grand assault upon England was launched, one of America's leading air experts, a former U.S. "ace," wrote a powerful piece in a string of newspapers stating flatly that the Nazi *Luftwaffe* would knock the R.A.F. to hell; Britain would be throwing up the sponge within three weeks of the first attack. Three weeks later millions of Yankees, sporting Union Jack badges in their buttonholes, were busy congratulating each other on the fact that "our side's doing very nicely," and the "air expert" had relapsed into a profound silence. Maybe he was trying, like Hitler, to discover what had hit the German air force.

One should not be too hard on the "expert," who was by no means the only person in the U.S. to miscalculate the punch packed by the Royal Air Force, or the cold-deck courage displayed by the British people. A test-poll taken in mid-August, when the average American shirt was wet with fear, would have shown that an overwhelming majority of the American people expected fearfully that, once the Nazis gave England "the works," the world would witness just another Polish promenade (this expectation was adduced as an argument for not releasing the much-discussed fifty destroyers lest they arrive just in time to be surrendered to Hitler, along with any surviving vessels of the British Fleet).

Then the Germans struck, the Spitfires got busy and American public opinion, agile as ever, turned another neat, natty, somersault. Rumours began to circulate in Washington that maybe, after all, the Nazis would not begin debarking at West 14th Street next Tuesday week because two highly placed American observers, back from London, had reported to the President that the British defences were so strong and workmanlike that the islands had a better than 50/50 chance of beating off any attack. There were whispers that the British aerial defences were what Americans would classify as of the "humdinger" variety. That "that crummy little man" (meaning Mr. Hitler) would have to think again. That Mussolini ("the ten-cent Caesar") was going to be on the spot if his pal didn't keep his promise and fish victory out of the bag by October. All of which assumed additional significance when, after making rude faces at the British for two months and bombing them for two weeks in what was billed as "the greatest attack of all time," the Nazi squadrons suddenly took time out to lick their wounds.

It was at this point that the Americans turned that neat somersault and cancelled all previous bets. If, as the *New York Times* wisely declared: "It is too soon for forecasts, too soon to draw one's breath in hope"; if one could still expect another all-in assault such as will probably have taken place before these words are read, still it remained true—and beyond the possibility of change—that a minor miracle had happened. A *Blitzkrieg*, duly advertised, had gone wrong. And both the British Air Force and the British civilians had shown they could take it. Whereupon shivery Americans recovered their nerve, looked upon life once more, and found it swell. Someone was standing up to that guy Hitler! Wonderful! Better still, that someone was the Power which traditionally defended—tax free—the Atlantic frontier of the Americas and could, with luck, keep the faceless men on the other side of the ocean, and well away from New York City, where a special staff under Mayor La Guardia was working overtime producing a what-to-do-if-you-are-bombed booklet, already christened I.I.C. ("If it Comes").

The Yankees decided that, far from being too late to rush further aid to the British, it was up to Congress to cut the cackle. Nation-wide test-polls showed a 2-to-1 majority in favour of sending over the destroyers; a 2-to-1 majority (in every State) for compulsory military service and an even larger majority for sending the mercy-ships across to bring children out of the blitz. All of which left Congressmen quite flustered, for this wasn't according to Hoyle. Everyone knows that no Congressman should have to reach any decision within nine weeks of an election.

Few, however, wasted any tears on Congress. The American people decided that, thanks to the R.A.F., the war was not going to end in three weeks with Hitler embarking troops for Brazil, via Dakar (one fear), or for New England, via Iceland (another fear) but that, on the contrary, the evening was, as Mr. Churchill had remarked, still young, and would be proceeding according to plan (British plan) next spring. By which time—with U.S. aircraft production nearing the 2,000 a month figure, British production both of planes and pilots keeping pace with a German output feeling the stranglehold of blockade, and America's 12,000 war factories getting into their stride—oh, boy; oh, boy!

Having decided that the impending defeat of Britain was just another false alarm, Americans felt *so* much better, and left their radios (news bulletins only once an hour through the day until 1.30 a.m.) long enough to go to a ball game, reflecting the while that those R.A.F. lads surely made a fellow feel kinda proud to be a democrat. And, of course, everyone knew that, if the U.S. had only twelve months in which to prepare, this country could, in Wendell Willkie's words "out-distance Hitler in any contest he chooses

in 1940 or after . . . on our own terms and in the American way"; could also defend Canada and the rest of the Americas; could even, if necessary, defend the British Isles. It was Mark Sullivan, veteran correspondent of the *New York Herald-Tribune*, who remarked sagely: "To express it picturesquely, if we were really going to acquire for ourselves all the things that made the British Navy effective as a protection of the American Continent we should be obliged to acquire England itself."

It had taken some snappy work by Spitfires and Hurricanes plus 1,000 German planes shot down in attacks over Britain between July 8th and August 22nd, to give the Americans their second wind and convince people that the end of the democratic world might yet be postponed for a century or so. Whereupon one group of big-hearted American citizens, understandably desirous of raising their hats to the R.A.F. for defending Manhattan, inserted full-page advertisements in the newspapers appealing for complete union between the United States of America and the British Empire now—to-day. Americans read the advertisement over their breakfast orange juice and said: "We've already declared a virtual protectorate over Canada, assumed responsibility for Allied possessions in the Caribbean, and given the English Joe Kennedy and our shirts—so what the hell difference does it make?"

The Isolationists, staunch to the end, intimated that the British Empire wasn't worth a nickel anyway. And that there was probably a catch in it. And advised citizens to watch Lord Lothian closely lest he pinch Capitol Hill one dark night.

It appears improbable (though, judged by the performance of the past fortnight, not impossible) that the residents of Kettering and Kansas City will have become citizens of a common Motherland before these lines appear. Enthusiasm for "our air force" apart (and it is true that on average thirty U.S. pilots are enlisting in the R.A.F. in Canada weekly, thus proving that the Yanks *are* coming—in small doses) there exist various good and sufficient reasons why this "union now" stuff should be soft-pedalled. Sufficient for the day is the fact that the Americans hate Hitler's guts and give Churchill a five-star rating in their gallery of national favourites.

For the first time since last September it is relatively easy to predict how the U.S. feels about the war, and the probable course of action America will take, always assuming that the R.A.F. can continue to fight off an enemy it would be childish to underrate.

The clue to the trend of U.S. opinion to-day lies in those test-polls I have quoted—and in the fact, incredible to those who knew the U.S. even six months ago, that the inauguration of a joint Canada-United States Defence Board, linking the fortunes of this republic with a nation already at war with Germany, created hardly a ripple on the surface of public opinion.

It is in the highest degree improbable that the U.S. will ever formally declare war on Germany unless directly challenged in the Western Hemisphere ("It is puerile," declares Major George Fielding Elliot, well-known military expert of the *New York Herald-Tribune*, "to talk now of 'getting into this war.' We are in it, as far as Hitler is concerned.") This country will pursue, as swiftly and efficiently as circumstances permit, the twin policies of (*a*) defence of the Americas, and (*b*) all possible material aid to Britain—even to the extent, should it become necessary, of placing U.S. naval bases at the disposal of the British fleet. Having done that—having decided to defend Iceland, Greenland, Canada, Cape Horn and what have you; having given the green light for the British Air Force to have first pick of the warplanes produced, having okayed the building of new factories in this vast bomb-proof arsenal to turn out everything from heavy tanks to shells for the British Army—having done all that, well, if Adolf doesn't like Uncle Sam's idea of "neutrality," who should worry?

As an Irish American said to me on 6th Avenue to-day: "It's damned funny. There used to be six different reasons why I disliked the English, and since they started licking the pants off Hitler, I can't remember one of them."

The U.S. attitude to the war can be put in a very few words. Americans know that the worst is yet to come. They know concentrated sudden death may break loose any moment. That invasion, even, may yet be attempted before the fogs call halt and 1940—Hitler's one chance—passes into history with his supreme task unaccomplished. But Americans also know, whatever may be happening in England as these lines are read, that the R.A.F. has pricked the bubble of Hitler's invincibility. And that whatever happens from now on, it is going to take a heluva lot of wind to blow it up again.

For that service to humanity, the American nation salutes the officers and men of the Royal Air Force, bowing very low, and believing, in the words of the *New York Times* that "If Britain holds out another hour, another day, we can begin to hope that Nazism has reached its flood tide. If Britain falls, many a full moon will round the earth before that tide recedes."

HESSELL TILTMAN

A LONDON DIARY

"She's 'avin' a 'oliday from old 'Itler," said Bill, who is about seven years old and my next-door neighbour in the country. He was pointing to a small girl who seemed to be singularly unaffected by the distant rattle of machine guns in the air. "If she don't be'ave 'erself, she'll 'ave to go back to old 'Itler," he explained with relish. Well, in spite of the frequent hum of aeroplanes above and the view of one which came down like a comet some miles away, our village was, comparatively speaking, a place for a holiday during the week-end. The village street was empty during the air raids, but the men carried on in the fields and our principal emotion was curiosity rather than fear. London also looked normal enough when I got to town, but the central problem stared one in the face. People who spend night after night in shelters get depressed; and one of "old 'Itler's" objectives will be achieved if we are all kept trotting down to shelters and up again. It would mean that the Nazis could succeed in upsetting our normal life to an outrageous extent. I know the risks and the difficulties, yet my own conclusion is that we must all think of ourselves in this matter as soldiers on duty. That means that we should never run unnecessary risks, but it also demands that we should put our job first. I think as we get experience of raids, we shall learn to sleep through raids in the safest places we can find (shelters should be made with room for mattresses), that we shall take cover when the danger is really close, but that we shall also get accustomed, when we are on duty, to working on whether we hear sirens or not. I may be biased by the fact that no bomb has yet dropped near me!

* * *

The concert given by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under the aegis of the L.C.C. at the Central Hall last Friday was an occasion for congratulations all round. I take off my hat, first to the L.C.C. who, finding an unspent entertainments fund accumulating on their hands, conceived the happy idea of spending part of the surplus on inviting the Philharmonic to give a concert, a number of distinguished people to listen to them, and some first-class caterers to feed the distinguished people. The L.C.C. has always been a good patron of education and the arts, but there was a peculiar timeliness about this gesture of support by London's Municipal Authority in the middle of a war to London's leading orchestra, which is one of the most distinguished of war's sufferers. A sufferer, but not a casualty, for the Philharmonic has held together through a series of vicissitudes which would have destroyed lesser men and shows every evidence of determination to go on doing so. Hats off, then, to the orchestra which refuses to let Hitler disperse it, and hats off, too, to Mr. Priestley, who has continually helped them with his very distinguished pen and his very forcible tongue. Scarcely had Mr. Priestley's familiar accents made themselves heard in a short speech of welcome than the still more familiar sounds of the siren interrupted him. Now, I thought, I shall see the behaviour of the Great under danger. I looked round at the distinguished audience. Mr. Montagu Norman was there—at least he was first there, then mysteriously missing and then there again—and Mr. H. G. Wells was also there. What, I wondered, would they do? Each of these so different men did the same thing, which was also, curiously enough, precisely what the rest of us did. They went on sitting there and listening to the music. The no doubt admirable air-raid accommodation was unused. In fact, so long as the music lasted, the world went on as usual. But when it was over, for what an interminable length of time where we were trapped and herded in the hall before we were permitted to venture out among the bombs and searchlights! It is not for their danger, but for the dreariness of these incarcerations that I chiefly resent the raids. We shall have to learn to go about our business normally or we shall all go mad from boredom.

* * *

I WAS in the British Museum library when one daylight air-raid warning was given, and nothing could have been more instant and military than the way in which the whole body of readers, marshalled by the staff, marched off through long galleries, past the Assyrian bulls, who seemed to behold the spectacle with a cynical eye, past the Greek and Roman antiquities, past the finger-rings and pottery and terracottas, or such of them as remain, into a quite spacious hall reinforced as a shelter. One hardly recognised the pleasant attendants in their grim-looking tin hats and with their armlets, but one generous

provision was made in this British Museum shelter in the shape of tables with chairs at them so that the student of hieroglyphics could still pursue them. It is true that no reader was allowed to take a book from the dome, but many of them took their own manuscripts, and it was very reassuring to see them immediately begin upon their interrupted work as though nothing out of the ordinary had happened. At the shelter under Lincoln's Inn Chapel, too, a table is provided where the legal gentlemen from the surrounding chambers can get on with their work. From Whitehall, however, there are complaints that it is compulsory to go to the shelter and that the light there is so bad that one cannot continue to read or dictate.

* * *

I must confess that the news of the bombing of German forests fills me with apprehension. I know that the line is difficult to draw and that factories and munition dumps are among the trees. But if in this dry season the forests should blaze on a grand scale, the consequences will long outlive the war and our generation. Soil erosion may follow and I recall the American dust bowl. Even the climate may change and the massacre of bird and animal life will alter the balance of nature. We ought to be slow to approve destruction that threatens the post-war recovery of the Continent.

* * *

The mistake, if " mistake " is the right word, that was made by the authorities in promiscuously interning refugees was so big that it cannot be remedied in a minute. Reversing the engines is a slow process. So far, I gather, about 800 wrongly interned aliens have been released by the new committee, about 800, who have been examined have been refused release, and there are another 1,500 under examination. The first cases to be given freedom have naturally been people with permits to emigrate, and sick people, who suffer terribly from camp conditions that are no particular hardship to young men. I have before me the case of a distinguished scientist who was writing a book and who continues to write in camp, though, being elderly, camp conditions have made him ill and the only place in which to write is the shower bath, when it is not being used during the day. These conditions may now be changed. I hear, for instance, that Huyton is now well organised and as comfortable as one can expect a camp to be. The real test of the authorities will come when we get to the political refugees. I say that will be the real test, because some of the authorities at least would do almost anything rather than acknowledge that they have to co-operate with people of Left opinions, and also because there will be cases in which there may be real difficulty in deciding whether the internee is genuinely anti-Nazi. There are both open and covert pro-Nazis in the camps. The first task is to separate the sheep from the goats. New categories may be required. There are, for instance, artists, whose work may be of the greatest importance, but whose services may not look essential during a period of great danger. I have in mind a musician who was under Government contract to play in public concerts, and who, unfortunately for him, was spirited away in the middle of a course of dental treatment which left him with half his teeth. Musicians should be particularly valuable in providing entertainment for bored audiences and particularly audiences of soldiers during the coming winter. Then one wonders whether anything adequate is being done for harmless and often elderly people, who cannot command influential support or prove that they can do anything very active in helping to win the war. Their cases are often amongst the most tragic. Miss Eleanor Rathbone, who has a splendid record in these matters, has also called attention, in a long letter to the *Manchester Guardian* last week, to the position of a large number of aliens from friendly countries who are still imprisoned and who are apparently forgotten.

* * *

Some weeks ago Messrs. Allen and Unwin, one of the most reliable of publishers, produced a small book called *Heil Hunger!* by Dr. Gumpert. It was a sensational account of the deterioration in the health and standard of living in Germany under the Nazi regime. The author provided a lot of facts and figures and the picture was so encouraging that Mr. Duff Cooper used it in one of his flamboyant broadcasts. I submitted it to an expert, who told me that he had great doubts about the reliability of this picture. In the September issue of the *Nineteenth Century*, these doubts are reinforced by a careful examination of *Heil Hunger!* by Dr. William Brend. He pulls the book to pieces. If there is a reply to Dr. Brend, it should be published at once. If Dr. Gumpert's statistics are really as misleading as Dr. Brend suggests, we badly need a book which gives us an accurate picture. That is the worst of sensational propaganda. Hundreds of people were encouraged to hear from Dr. Gumpert's book that Germany is in a very bad way; if they now hear that they were misled, they will be correspondingly depressed.

* * *

Strangers used to stare at a Barrie-like figure in an old-fashioned bowler hat and untidy coat who used to hang about outside the Cambridge cinemas studying the bills apparently debating whether he would go in. They wondered why undergraduates and dons were so respectful until they learnt that this shabby figure was " J. J.," the Master of Trinity. " J. J." was a remarkable character such as one only finds at the old Universities. People talked about his addiction to crosswords, his appetite for novels, good, bad and indifferent, his hearty applause for a good Rugby tackle and his frank ignorance of Einstein. They often forgot his greatness. Forgot that he had been Cavendish Professor at 27, having reached Cambridge " by accident " from Manchester; that he discovered the electron and " fathered " broadcasting, television, wireless-telephony and the talkie, since his electron-theory led Ambrose Fleming to the discovery of the thermionic valve, through the " Edison Effect." They forgot that he was one of the original appointments to the Order of Merit, a Nobel Laureate, and holder of Degrees from over twenty universities. At 83, regardless of his undisciplined dentures, he would reminisce and enjoy his own jokes so much that his listeners would chuckle with him rather than at them. One story whose moral he loved to point out was that of the student who was sent to him with the worst report a tutor could give. He was hopeless until " J. J." set him to study the mathematics of the collision between spheres. " J. J." discovered that the boy was keen on billiards. " I taught him maths. through his billiards," he would say. " He began to work like a nigger because maths. had a practical meaning for the first time. But for billiards he would have been ploughed. Instead he had a brilliant career." This practical approach, as much as the poverty of Cavendish Laboratory, made it the " string and sealing wax laboratory " where, under " J. J." and his pupil, Lord Rutherford, British physics led the whole world in the study of the atom. When the atom was split, it was with the help of biscuit tins and plasticine. Another of his stories came from days when he was chairman of the Inventions Board in the last war. Thousands of cranky ideas poured in, but the " corker," according to the Master of Trinity, was the one from the man who wanted to train cormorants to pick the lime from between bricks and then send them over to demolish the factory buildings of Krupps.

* * *

My lunch would have cost about 2*s.* 6*d.* in Soho. A very modest affair, I felt, considering the quality of the restaurant to which my friend, resplendent in uniform, had brought me. The bill, I noticed, was about 10*s.* 6*d.* a head. Looking round the tables I calculated that on that basis the eighty people at lunch must certainly have spent £50 and probably much more. This set me off thinking about economy and equality of sacrifice in wartime and my eye caught a headline in the *Daily Telegraph*. Captain Crookshank, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, had, it seems, delivered a luncheon speech on this subject at Plymouth. He said that in order to defeat the two enemies—Nazis and Inflation—everyone " must save to the point of self-denial."

> People still don't seem to realise their full duty in this regard. A woman who was looking after evacuated children, when asked last week how she kept them in order, said: " Allow them to go to the pictures or some entertainment twice a week." Five children to the pictures twice a week! That is the type of mind your savings committees must get at: that is the atmosphere you must dissipate.

" That, " I repeated to myself, " is the type of mind you must get at; that is the atmosphere you must dissipate."

CRITIC

PLEASE, MR. NAZI

Please, Mr. Nazi, bomb my neighbour's garden,
His wife will hang her washing on the line.
His rubbish heap is really past all pardon.
His cabbages are forwarder than mine.
His dustbin stinks: his roller squeaks: his mower
Murders the afternoon when I would rest.
He keeps as many noisesome pets as Noah.
His watchdog barks: his chicken run's a pest.
The sight offends me of his earnest labour.
Why can't he let his blasted garden be?
Please, Mr. Nazi, bomb my next-door neighbour;
But take great care, and don't go bombing me.

G. D. H. C.

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Edwin F. Catford.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

"No one in this district that I know will begin to shoot pheasants before October. I certainly would not think of it, but in any case I am indisposed. The whole thing is most unsporting."—The Duke of Atholl, commenting on the Government Order that pheasants may be shot from September 1, instead of October 1, reported in the *Scottish Daily Express*.

Pleasant spot on a warm afternoon is open air terrace of Newyorker Bar Club in Park-lane. Richard Leggott, who runs it with Gordon Naffey, is inventor of ladies' cocktail called Gates of Heaven.

Drink contains small portion of gold-dust which clings artistically to lipstick.—*Evening Standard*.

A cricket Blue, by the way, was telling me the other day of his experiences on the beach at Dunkirk. He said that one of the things that impressed him was that it would have been possible to pick up two first-class "Gentlemen v. Players" sides.—*Daily Telegraph*.

A girl who had run out from a hairdressing saloon with her hair half done to watch the spectacle said: "I wouldn't have missed it to speak to Clark Gable."—*Daily Mail*.

Sir,—Someone has said that the new B.B.C. time signal is quite a nice "tune"—but what were the words?

The quiet unobtrusive insistence of the simple notes so characteristic of our staid national dignity, reaching the hearts of countless millions of British peoples at home and abroad, confident in the power and might of the Empire, should encourage everyone to murmur as they listen—"We shall win!"—Correspondent in the *Sunday Times*.

BLUE-BLOOD TO THE HEAD

WITH a bluntness which is like a whiff of grape-shot, the Select Committee on National Expenditure has exposed the inefficiency of the officer-class of the Women's Auxiliary Territorial Service. It tells the country flatly that it is not getting its money's worth from this service and that there is something queer about the way in which useless officers are being retained and recommendations for promotions from the ranks are being locked. Short of publishing a black-list of the officers concerned—and it would read like the guest-list of a Charity Ball—the Committee could not have been more outspoken nor confirmed more completely the charges which have been made in the House of Commons and elsewhere that Snobbery and Influence have "rigged" this Service.

So disquieting are the disclosures which the Committee makes in its Twelfth Report that it seems impossible that the War Office can resist the demand for investigation and reorganisation, which will go far beyond steps taken when the War Office centralised the administration at the outbreak of war. Then the proportion of officers to other ranks was reduced, steps were taken to fit existing officers into the new organisation and the rule was introduced that, in future, officers would not be appointed directly but would have to serve in the ranks and pass through a cadet corps. The promotion of officers was to follow Army practice and a Cadet Board at the War Office was to interview candidates whose names had been submitted by Platoon and Company Commanders through Group Commandants and Command Headquarters.

"In spite of this reorganisation with the intention of rewarding efficiency," says the Report scathingly, "and although in a number of cases the exigencies of war have now proved the worth of these officers, the Sub-Committee are of the opinion that too little has been done to remove those who have been found inefficient, while on the other hand in some cases no reasons have been given for not promoting those who have been recommended. In these circumstances, real efficiency cannot be obtained, with the result that money is being wasted."

The damage was done when the A.T.S. was originally set up. The presidents of the County Territorial Associations were left to choose the County Commandants, who in turn selected Company Commanders and subordinate officers. It was a super-sort of Bridge Party. A title or social influence could ensure a commission. As Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, Chief Controller of the A.T.S., said naively in an interview some months ago, "County and Society women were chosen by the presidents of the local Territorial Associations, who naturally chose women whose abilities they knew. They thought it would give the Service standing."

Abilities for what? Arranging hunt suppers? Or opening church bazaars?

The result—not surprising in the scramble for commissions—was that the number of officers and sub-officers was high in relation to the peacetime establishment, "and the selection of individual officers," says the Report, "could not be based on experience of their performance of routine work in war."

Whatever effect the snob-appeal of a title might have had in attracting women to the Service in peacetime, it certainly carried no recommendation for the earnest, specialised girls who sacrificed, in thousands of cases, good jobs to join the Service after the outbreak of war. On the contrary, it meant that whatever their merits and their claims to commissions their chances of promotion were blocked by the surfeit of titles at the top. The Service was suffering from a rush of blue-blood to the head.

When the officers of the A.T.S. were gazetted early this year, *The London Gazette* read like Debrett. The Chief Controller was Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, who had earned her title in the last war. Her immediate subordinates, with the rank of Controllers, were the Duchess of Devonshire and Lady Violet Astor. The 26 Chief Commandants (pay 28*s*. 8*d*. a day) included the Viscountess Cantelupe, the Duchess of Marlborough, Viscountess Trenchard, Lady Barnard, Lady Harris, Lady Lawrence, Lady Lawson-Tancred, the Hon. Miss Elinor Kemp and Dame Regina Evans. Of the 52 Senior Commandants (19*s*. a day) 16 possessed titles. The list of company and junior commanders was aromatic with "debs."

Even the cadet system was open to grave suspicion. Girls who had only their efficiency to recommend them found that Lady This and the Hon. That by-passed them into the higher ranks and obtained commissions. When the names of four titled women who had been gazetted were challenged, the Secretary of State for War gave the assurance that they had served in the ranks for from 10 to 14 months.

"Serving in the ranks" is a relative term. It can mean driving a general or a senior official around and sleeping at the Town House in Mayfair or it can mean throwing up a good secretarial job and home comforts to become a typist at some remote station, under military conditions and restricted leave.

It can also mean "ghosting" for an inefficient commander and running a station with volunteer-private rank, with lots of up-aboves to keep you in your place. That was the experience of a woman of highest qualifications, trained in catering and management, who volunteered. She went through the routine of drills, gas lectures, etc., uncomplainingly, and by her obvious abilities was called in to "run things" for the C.O. She "ran things" as a volunteer-private until she was told that she had been appointed Assistant Company Commander at another station. She was received as an officer, signed documents as an officer and was authorised to wear officer's uniform. Her promotion was posted. Then suddenly a senior officer arrived, brushed her aside, had an interview with her C.O. and came out and told her brutally that she was not entitled to her rank, that it would not be regularised and that she would return to mess with the volunteer-privates. When the A.T.S. protested that this was an intolerable humiliation and that the others to whom she had been giving orders as an officer would think she had been reduced to the ranks for some misdemeanour, her protests were contemptuously ignored. When she pleaded that she should at least be transferred to another company, this was refused, and when she insisted on seeing the Chief Commandant she was told that her chances of promotion would be blocked for all time. She was then confined to billet for three days like a naughty child. Leave was refused until the medical officer who had found her medically fit for general service only a week before, now found her suffering—not without cause—from a breakdown and ordered her leave. She finally obtained her discharge on medical grounds. Ill-health, fictitious or real, is the one escape available for the dissatisfied. This may account for some proportion of the surprising amount of sickness in the A.T.S., which is the subject of comment in the Committee's report.

Now the Select Committee recommends that the peacetime system of confidential reports, by which merits of officers were assessed and which has been suspended, should be resumed and that reorganisation of the Service should be preceded by a demand for a report on all officers and sub-officers. Then necessary action—promotion, reposting or termination of service—should follow. It also proposed that a Board should be set up composed of senior representatives of each Command to consider the promotion and retention of all officers above a certain rank. For dealing with officers below that rank

similar boards, consisting of three or more A.T.S. officers, should be set up in the Commands.

Since the A.T.S. is essentially a specialist service (although no one would guess it from the original appointments) the Committee proposes increased opportunities for promotion by the creation of ranks equivalent to First, Second and Third-class Warrant Officers in the Army. This, it is hoped, will attract the necessary recruits of the right type for "positions of trust and responsibility of a technical character."

The Report does not stop there. It discloses more causes for disquiet, about which the House of Commons will have a lot to say. To place the Command in the hands of women whose only qualification is that they have titles or are the wives of influential officers has meant sheer incompetence. The Committee comment on the bad feeding, bad billetting, and bad medical care. The girls are suffering hardship, it says, through lack of milk and fruit, etc. "The evidence has shown how unsatisfactory billetting can be," and it demands more care in the selection of the type of house to be requisitioned and to details of plumbing, heating and ventilation. It points out that the A.T.S. has no adequate medical service and that the health of the girls has been affected by lack of attention during the winter. In isolated districts they were sent to Poor Law Institutions never intended for the treatment of such patients.

Women M.P.s have been jealous and critical of this purely women's service from the beginning. Lady Astor has demanded efficiency, "whether the officers are duchesses or kitchen-maids," and Miss Ellen Wilkinson, before she became a member of the Government, has said most of the things the Select Committee are now saying. Now is their opportunity to demand a proper purge and the implementing of this Report, even though coronets roll in the dust.

JOTTINGS ON NORMAL LIFE

As I was sitting in a Buckinghamshire inn on Saturday morning, a low-set man in a cap came in and called for a pint of beer. He raised the glass mug to his lips with a look of joyful anticipation, swallowed a large gulp, made a horrible grimace as he held the mug up to the light, and said: "I don't know what's the matter with this beer. It tastes terrible." "It should be all right," another customer told him; "Ted tapped a new barrel this morning." "This beer didn't come out of a new barrel," said the low-set man, and he took a cautious sip to see whether it could possibly be so bad as he thought it was. He made another face and called to the landlord: "What's the matter with your beer, Ted?" The landlord assured him there was nothing the matter with his beer. The low-set man replied: "I don't know what you call nothing the matter; but it's undrinkable."

The landlord leaned over the bar with a friendly smile. "Now I'm going to tell you something," he said. "Every Saturday morning I disinfect all the glasses in this house. You have to be careful, with all sorts of people knocking about these days. Well, I disinfected all the glasses this morning as usual, and what you're tasting now and complaining about isn't the beer but the disinfectant. There's no need to worry. It'll do you good. It'll keep you," he said, with an ingratiating smile, "from getting foot-and-mouth disease." The low-set man tried to argue with the landlord that it was possible to wash glasses after having disinfected them, but the landlord, answering a call from another customer, went away laughing. "It'll do you good," he repeated as he turned away.

Some other people came in, one of them a member of the Home Guard. He was a tall fellow with a red moustache, and he was full of an adventure he had had when on duty the night previous. Just after midnight, he said, he had found an elderly farmer, obviously overcome with drink, asleep on the earth above one of the local trenches. "I says to him, 'What are you doing there?' and he says, 'It's all right—go away, I'm sleeping.' I says to him, 'You can't do that there 'ere. You got to go home.' 'Go away,' he says; 'I don't want to go home. I'm staying here.' 'Right,' I says; 'then it's my duty to shoot you. I've got five rounds of ammunition here, and I'm going to give you three of them. There couldn't be a better place to bury you—all nice and ready made. I'm sorry,' I says, 'but it's my duty,' and I raised my rifle as if getting ready to shoot him. You would have laughed. 'Put that b——y thing away,' he yells, as he jumps to his feet. 'I'll put it away,' I says, 'as soon as I see you starting for home.' Well, I don't think I ever saw a man walk faster. A bit wobbly, you know, but I should say six or seven miles an hour. I never laughed so much in my life. 'Put that b——y thing away,' he shouted. It would have done your heart good to hear him."

I had left London for the country on Friday afternoon, and we had scarcely got half-a-mile from the house when the third air-raid warning of the day sounded. The friend who was driving me refused to stop and take cover in a public shelter on the ground that one cannot smoke in a public shelter. He compromised by drawing the car up at the side of the road under what to me seemed to be a rather insufficient tree. He also consented to close the sunshine roof. As we sat there an air-raid warden came up to us with a cheerful smile. "Are you here for the duration?" he asked. I explained that my friend's passion for smoking made it impossible for him to enter a public shelter. "Well," said the warden, "if you take the first turning to the left you'll find a new shelter with nobody in it, where he can smoke himself silly if he wants to." We drove on to the shelter, a little brick one-roomed house—a rather dull spot with not even a chair in it. We had it to ourselves till another man entered. The rumble of two or three explosions in the distance was audible. After a time, the merry air-raid warden's face peered round the entrance. "Well," he said, "keep your heads down and your peckers up," and hurried off on his round. My friend was extremely indignant at this, as he said there was nothing wrong with the position of his pecker.

Hearing other people driving their cars outside as usual, my friend insisted on setting off again. The blue sky above looked as innocent as a child's eyes, and London lay almost in a country silence in the sunshine. A few cyclists were riding slowly along the streets, and there were buses running, though most of them had drawn up by the kerb. There were newsboys selling papers in the streets and one or two men were sitting reading their papers in the open air. We must have driven about twenty miles when the All Clear was sounded as we passed through a riverside town, and women and children hurried out of the shelters like flights of pigeons but with curiously unapprehensive faces. As we got further into the country, the road became thick with military vehicles of all kinds with Bren guns pointing at the sky. The sirens sounded again and we stopped at a wayside hotel for a drink. The car park attendant said that there had been a fight overhead and that two German aeroplanes had been brought down. As we sat in the lounge, an elderly lady who had been out for a view of the raid came in with a friend and, in a tone of disapproval, said: "Everybody seems to be sitting very tense." But, so far as I could see, she was wrong. The lounge and the tea-room beside it seemed to me to be just the normally dull lounge and tea-room of an English hotel.

In the next town we reached many people were shopping as usual though three bombs had been dropped on it that day and the raid was supposed still to be going on. Then the All Clear sounded and the streets were filled with cheerful-looking girls in summer clothes again. When we arrived at the village where we were to spend the night, half the village was bright-eyed with boastfulness over having seen two German airmen coming down by parachute, and the other half was cross with itself for having missed the spectacle. "Oh, it was lovely," said a small boy to me, and you can see him cycling up and down expectantly when an air raid is on and the aeroplanes are zooming overhead. The gardener's wife who lives a few cottages away said to me next morning: "They're all expecting a bit of fun to-day." And what she meant by fun was that the appetite for seeing parachutes had infected everybody in the neighbourhood except me.

In the afternoon between the lunchtime air-raid warning and the early evening air-raid warning two teams in white flannels were playing cricket on the common—a beautiful picture in as beautiful a year as has ever shone on England. A litter of infant pigs came out on the grass and then, suddenly taking fright, scurried back like autumn-blown leaves to the safety of the farmyard gate. In the plum-tree above the deck-chair in which I was sitting a nuthatch was walking uphill in sweet security. There were goldfinches about that had been feeding in the morning among the corn-flowers. It is, I suppose, as natural to enjoy these things in 1940 as it is to enjoy our three meals a day when they happen to be enjoyable. A few years ago I could not have believed that it was possible for so vast an amount of normality to survive in a world so abnormal. I always agreed with those people who say that this is a queer world, but I never realised that, even when it became infinitely queerer, it would remain in so many respects the ordinary world we knew.

Of all the normal things I have noticed lately, I think, the most normal was the voice of a charming woman in the A.R.P. who knocked at my door during the black-out the other night, and, when I opened it, said to me: "I just called to ask you, if a delayed-action bomb

falls in your garden, to let an air raid warden know as soon as possible." "But how," said I, "can I tell that a delayed-action bomb has fallen in the garden?" "If you hear a thud," she said, "that will be either an incendiary bomb or a delayed-action bomb, and all you have to do is to go out and look for it with a torch, and then if you find one, tell the air raid warden."

Even more normal than the voice in which this was said, perhaps, however, is the spectacle, if you drive through the London streets just after the All Clear has been sounded, of mothers wheeling out their babies in perambulators and go-carts in the sun. The baby in the open air is a symbol of faith in the future, and there is nothing more normal than faith in the future.

Y. Y.

THE BRITISH ISLES

In war . . . we have to make sacrifices of liberty. Nevertheless . . . the new offences created by regulations under the Emergency Powers Act will vanish with the advent of victory and peace.—Sir Archibald Sinclair, August 21st.

THE British Isles! the British Isles
Where each man's home his castle is,
Where everlasting freedom smiles,
Stronghold of subjects' liberties!
But where am I? and where are they?
It is no longer so to-day.

We looked to Britain's War Command,
They look to Britain's victory,
But musing on our fortress land
They deemed that we were far too free,
And freedom's isle they could not save
Till it was Magna Carta's grave.

Fill high the frothy mug and drink!
The Statute Book is crossed and scored,
While on such themes we must not think,
Let Britain's beverage be poured,
And toast our legal safeguards lost
In half the beer at twice the cost!

We have our War Zone justice, yes!
But where is *habeas corpus* gone?
Where is the freedom of the press?
It rests with Sir John Anderson.
The rights our fathers signed and sealed
Were theirs to win but ours to yield.

In vain—in vain they may allege
We make but passing sacrifice;
Our liberties once placed in pledge
Our mutual murmurs cut no ice.
So, lest they make it still more dear,
Dash down yon draught of British beer!

SAGITTARIUS

MEN'S RIGHTS

THE Women's Rights Societies are still, I believe, agitating for still more Women's Rights. What they demand is absolute equality of both sexes before the Law. By all means let their Wrongs be righted; but what about the Wrongs of men? Men are conscripted, women aren't; men can be flogged, but women can't; men can be savagely sentenced for the breach of taboos which women can break with complete impunity.

One of the most fantastic of these sex-inequalities is to be found in the law of Slander. By a Bill passed in 1881, by, I believe, Mr. Gladstone, it has become the law that if a lady calls me a "loose fish," I can claim no damages unless I can prove that this charge has caused me material injury. But if I retort on her this aqueous imputation, she can, without the slightest proof of injury, extort from me a sum that may amount (as I believe it did in a recent case) to £20,000.

I have some experience of this Law; not indeed as a slanderer, but a member of a jury summoned to try such a slanderous accusation. Twenty years ago I had a house in Hampshire; and from various parts of that county was collected at the county town a special (not a common) jury, of doctors, lawyers, superior shop-keepers, and householders on the edge of gentility like myself.

I took the train to Winchester, and proceeded through the streets of this medieval town to the Court house. Soon an eighteenth-century procession came in view—a great, gilded, lumbering coach, with outriders as I remember, and certainly four gold-embroidered flunkeys outside, and inside, one of His Majesty's Justices, majestically beperiwigged and robed. This was Mr Justice Sankey (now Viscount Sankey, and at one time Lord Chancellor of the Realm). Another coach followed, in which sat the High Sheriff of Hampshire in his uniform of state. The coaches drew up with a fanfare of trumpets, and both these Dignitaries descended. Not long after his Lordship, surrounded by halberdiers with their halberds, and ushers with staves, entered the Court, and took his seat upon the Bench. We jurors were sworn in upon the holiest of all Books; and the case began. It was brought by a certain Mrs. Wilkins, of Southampton, who, her Counsel told us, moved in the most exclusive circles of that port. More than a year before, this "Socialite" (to use the happy American term) had been addressed by the Stationmaster of Eastleigh Junction in terms in which, after six months of pondering (assisted, I dare say, by a lawyer on the lookout for a profitable case), she had decided might be found a double meaning. What occurred was this; during the Four Years War Mrs. Wilkins had taken on the unpaid, patriotic task of visiting certain stations on the South-Western Railway, to clean the station lamps. Once a week or so she would, therefore, arrive at Eastleigh station, bringing with her a bag containing the implements of her task. This bag she was accustomed to deposit in the ticket-office, in charge of the ticket-dispenser, the high-born patriotic volunteer, Miss Voice. Such action was a breach of the railway regulations; the elderly Stationmaster, however, Mr. Barge, had winked at it throughout the winter months. Cold had been that winter, icy the windswept platforms of Eastleigh station; but in the ticket office Miss Voice kept all day a cheerful home-fire burning, round which the principal notabilities of the junction, the head porter, the head bricklayer, the chiefs of the signals and of the parcels office, would drop in for a cosy cup of tea. There Mrs. Wilkins would join them when she had cleaned the lamps.

Spring came at last to Eastleigh, and one May day Mrs. Wilkins arrived from Southampton, with, we may presume, the spirit of May in her heart—certainly with her bag. This bag she carried as usual to the ticket office, where, however, Miss Voice, like Fate in Milton's Hymn, cried, "No!" No longer, so the Stationmaster had decreed, could she make use of that convenience—only he himself, and Miss Voice, must be allowed to enter the ticket office.

Mrs. Wilkins at once raged down the platform, and in the corridor leading to his office she met the man she sought. "Where," she asked with icy, aristocratic irony, of the great Excluder, "am I now to be permitted to put my bag?"

"Put it in the parcels office," Mr. Barge replied.

"I won't! I shall leave it here in this corridor." And then, making use of an expression unbecoming, to my mind, in a Socialite of her distinction, Mrs. Wilkins said, "The parcels office is lousy."

Thereupon the Stationmaster also lost his temper, and with it that refinement of speech which we expect from the High-Up-Ones of earth, and a word dropped from his lips which nearly proved his ruin. It was to decide the precise meaning and all the implications of this word that I had been dragged from my dictionaries, and the rest of us assembled, at great public expense and with the sound of trumpets, in the ancient town of Winchester.

As one who enjoys the reputation of a linguistic expert, I was much interested in this point of verbal usage. First of all, though, I must explain that the word in question—it was "shelter"—has in railway parlance a somewhat special meaning, being used of any nook or protected corner where a railway official, or a visiting passenger, can find shelter from the wind and rain. With only this technical meaning in his mind, or at most with reference to the winter teas, "I won't have you," said Mr. Barge, "making this corridor a shelter for men."

A large coloured plan of the Junction was now produced and handed to the jury, a cross on it indicated the exact spot where the word was spoken. This was a point of the greatest importance. If Mr. Barge had addressed Mrs. Wilkins a foot or so behind this spot, the remark would have been privileged; in his office he might have deluged her with the foulest language in his vocabulary and she could have claimed no damages. Being spoken in an unprivileged place just outside this office she was entitled, we were told, to heavy damages, although no ear might have overheard the word in question.

As a matter of fact, one ear had overheard it, and into the witness-box stepped a young porter in his Sunday clothes, with his hair

plastered down over the ear in question, to give evidence that in passing he had heard the Stationmaster's remark, which he now repeated like a parrot, as if he had memorised it (as I dare say he had) under legal tuition. Mrs. Wilkins, looking very smart and very angry, now entered the box and gave evidence of the way the Stationmaster had addressed her.

Mr. Barge followed her and denied that he had spoken in this fashion. He sadly admitted that on this occasion, more than a year before, words (but not these words) had passed between him and Mrs. Wilkins.

"Now, gentlemen of the jury," Mrs. Wilkins' Counsel addressed us, "we do not claim that our client has suffered any damage from the words which, as our evidence has shown, were uttered by the defendant. We do not need to claim it, such is the wise provision of our English laws to keep unsullied the reputation of our English countrywomen. But we do claim that in the phrase 'shelter for men,' there lurks a double meaning which might be misinterpreted as the expression of a desire to use that corridor as a place for misconduct—to put it plainly—with a member, or with members, of the opposite sex. You, gentlemen of the jury," the barrister proceeded, "you, as men of the world, know that the slightest imputation on a lady's character, the merest breath of gossip, though no one believes it, makes a difference—a slight difference perhaps, but still a difference, in the way she is regarded—even in the way you, gentlemen, regard her. If, gentlemen, you will reflect what would be your feelings if your sister, your wife, your mother, were spoken to in this way, you will, I am sure, award our client the ample damages she deserves."

Mr. Barge's Counsel submitted that there was no case to go before a jury; but Mr. Justice Sankey ruled that there was a case under the law of 1881, which he read gravely to us.

Thereupon we went to a room downstairs, to discuss our verdict.

I need hardly say that by now this contact with reality, and what we call real people, had come to take for me the aspect of a dream in which "I was the Dreamer, they the Dream." Or at least it was like the famous case of Bardell versus Pickwick; and like Mr. Pickwick, an unwonted spirit of determination took possession of me. I was resolved that the Southampton Socialite should not succeed in ruining the respectable Mr. Barge, who, his Counsel had told us, had borne a blameless sway for thirty years or more over Eastleigh station.

"Now, gentlemen," began our Foreman, "what we must now decide is the sum which shall be paid her by Mr. Barge. In my opinion that sum should by no means be a small one."

The pleasure of being called a Man of the World, and of disposing of large sums of other people's money, diffuses a pleasant glow all through one's being. Though I was conscious of this glow, my resolution was not changed.

"We all know, Sir," I heard myself, in this dream which was not a dream, address the Foreman, "that the Law, as Mr. Bumble puts it, is an Ass; but surely it is not such an ass as to allow a mere suspected innuendo—or insinuendo, if you like" (my pun was wasted on the jury), "to ruin this old man? I listened with care to his Lordship's reading of the Law, and I do not consider that it applies to this case."

The jury turned on me with angry faces. "It does apply! The merest breath—your sister—your wife!" these gentlemen of Hampshire shouted at me.

"Well, gentlemen," I answered, "you can take it that though we sit here in Winchester for a week, I shall agree to no verdict in favour of Mrs. Wilkins."

("I'm with you," an elderly, shy-looking man whispered in my ear.)

At last, when we seemed to have reached a deadlock, it was suggested that we should send up a note to the Judge.

Before long we were summoned to the Court upstairs, where the case which had followed ours was for the moment interrupted. His Lordship read to us again the Act of 1881. Did Mr. Barge's remark to Mrs. Wilkins entitle her to damages under the Act? It did not, he ruled; nothing would suffice but a definite charge of unchaste conduct. Why, then, had he not dismissed the case at once?

Again we rose and bowed to his Lordship, who gravely, and without a wink, bowed to us in return. Then an angry jury went downstairs to decide on the only possible verdict. Mrs. Wilkins not only lost her case, but had to pay Mr. Barge's costs as well. I have always hoped that they amounted to no inconsiderable sum.

Having sat on other juries, and witnessed as spectator other trials even more absurd than this one, I have sometimes wondered whether this car of so-called Justice, which, to the sound of trumpets, rumbles on from one Assize to another, is not like a car of pageant in some foreign city, with dragons breathing flame and gesticulating giants, got up simply as a solemn farce for the entertainment of the public.

But on the English car there are unluckily real dragons and real giants: its Juggernaut wheels mangle and crush living men. Out of the Dark Ages it bears a rubbish heap of sex-taboos, which often occupy, I am told, almost half the time of many Assizes. If these taboos have been broken, savage penalties are inflicted (but never on female offenders), though in the opinion of all enlightened criminologists, most of such offences should not be penalised at all. Men, too, but practically never women, are forced to pay huge sums in Breach of Promise suits.

Such is the equality of the sexes before the Law.

L. PEARSALL SMITH.

THE FILM AT WAR

THE British Government's failure to make full use of the film medium in its home and foreign propaganda has been known and deplored for a year. Those concerned at this waste of such an influential medium, in the use of which pre-war Britain was adept, were aware that a Select Committee has been hearing relevant evidence. The resultant report, however, was not expected to be so strong in its castigation.* At the outbreak of war, we had in Britain a three-sided production machine for films: the commercial studio producers who, after a lean time following the 1938 collapse, were beginning to put on the screen some worthwhile pictures of British life (e.g. *The Stars Look Down*); the documentary film-makers who for ten years had gone from strength to strength supported by sponsorship; and the newsreel companies who flirted along with gossip rather than news. In the foreign field, some of the feature pictures were having success in the U.S. and Dominions, while the export of documentaries—unofficially arranged—was winning for Britain laurels in America and at the same time performing a cultural purpose.

At the outbreak of war, the Ministry of Information included in its brood a Films Division, to which Sir Joseph Ball was appointed chief. Sir Joseph's only connections with films, so far as Wardour Street could find, were his work as Director of Research at the Conservative Central Office which presumably brought him into touch with the Party's film propaganda (for which it had equipped a studio), and a reputed financial interest in commercial production. For the rest, the Films Division's personnel was made up of other ex-members of the Conservative Central Office, a Conservative M.P., some Civil Servants and a few friends. Only three things came out of Ball's four months reign: *The Lion Has Wings* (produced by Mr. Korda at his own expense but with, it is said, Ministry's guarantees) which hoodwinked the newsreel companies into co-operation; a statement to the press that British films would shortly flood the world; and a reputation for lost memoranda. Of that period, the Select Committee's Report says: "The G.P.O. Film Unit was not fully employed in the early months of the war." In point of fact, these four months saw the whole machinery for documentary film production, built up by sweat and blood for ten years, wholly ignored by the Films Division. Instead of being used to its utmost, as it requested in numerous memoranda to the Ministry, the documentary movement, with all its powers of propaganda film making and research, was permitted to languish until the Rockefeller Foundation from New York commissioned it to write scenarios on the impact of war on civilian life.

In the New Year Sir Kenneth Clark succeeded Sir Joseph Ball. The Report says:

> At that date the Division was placed under a new Director and an attempt was made to obtain guidance upon policy. Nothing, however, more precise than a general policy of reassuring the public emerged and with the exception of the three anti-gossip films no film, until quite recently, has been shown in this country which could be described as having a specific purpose in view.

During Sir Kenneth's reign, a number of documentaries were given out by a Civil Servant appointed Film Producer, most of them never being finished because their subjects became out of date, and the much-criticised *49th Parallel* film started. For this venture a large unit was sent to Canada with Elisabeth Bergner, an artists' agent and other hand-picked people (who are still there). Says the Report:

> For this film the Ministry has arranged to advance a sum not exceeding £25,000. . . . In view of the considerations here set forth the Sub-Committee regard this kind of venture with the gravest misgiving.

To which it adds a text which should be hung on every studio wall:

> Effort and experience, art and imagination, genius itself, none nor all of these have power to command infallible success. One thing only is certain in feature film production—the uncertainty of success.

The G.P.O. Film Unit, with its famous reputation for documentaries,

* The Thirteenth Report of the Select Committee on National Expenditure, H.M. Stationery Office, price 3*d*.

was taken over by the Ministry on 1st April, made *Squadron* 992 and *Spring Offensive*, two admirable films, the first of which was bungled on distribution and the second shelved by the Films Division. The G.P.O. Unit was now like every other documentary unit—rebellious; the feature companies were contemptuous; and the newsreels sick to death of being refused facilities, for which, according to the Report, the Films Division was not wholly to blame:

> The fighting Services have in a general way declared their willingness to provide facilities but in practice few facilities have been obtained . . . the Sub-Committee feel that the fighting Services have not fully appreciated the value of propaganda as an integral part of the war effort.

Since then the Films Division has launched its Five Minute Films Programme, by which short films on national problems or effort receive free screen-time in the 4,500 cinemas of Britain. The Report welcomes this kind of film which it describes "as a cross between 'The March of Time' and the B.B.C. series 'In Town Tonight'," of which the cost is about £3,000 a week to an audience estimated at between 15 and 20 million people each week. Especially in this regard the Report comments: ". . . it is the duty of the Films Division in the interests of economy and efficiency to demand precise directions from the Home Intelligence Branch before embarking upon any programme of films for this country."

The Report makes public for the first time important plans now being put in hand by the Films Division for a national non-theatrical distribution scheme at a cost of £195,000 for the first year. By this project 16 mm. projectors will be bought or hired for holding shows to specially organised audiences in all parts of the country, supplemented by the use of cinemas out of hours. This ambitious scheme, based of course on the pre-war non-theatrical display successes of the G.P.O., and the Gas and Oil industries, can have far-reaching effects. It accomplishes in wartime what might have taken fifty years in peace: a nation-wide system of projectors for special purposes which can be used for educational as well as publicity purposes. On this account, the Sub-Committee's finding that: "No further commitments should be entered into in connection with the proposed scheme of non-theatrical display, unless very clear evidence is obtained from experience that it is making a contribution to the war effort commensurate with the expenditure" is to be regretted, except that "very clear evidence" is likely to be forthcoming if the scheme is well conducted.

In general, having remarked upon the lack of persons at the head of the Films Division familiar with the film trade (this presumably before the appointment of Mr. Sydney Bernstein), the Report does not look kindly upon documentary films. "The documentary film," it states, "the film of an instructional or informative character, has very serious limitations as a means of propaganda in time of war," and continues to describe the length of time required to make documentaries, adding, that for this reason some had to be abandoned. With due respect, it may be said that this finding displays an ignorance of documentary production methods, which can be geared to almost any speed commensurable with the physical limitations of manufacture. The fact that the Films Division has, with the notable exceptions of *Squadron* 992 and *Men of the Lightship*, had bad luck in its dealings with documentaries should not have been accepted by the Sub-Committee as a reflection on this *genre* of film-making. By and large, the documentary film movement, including the Ministry's own unit at the G.P.O., has received unfortunate handling by the Films Division. Its memoranda have been requested and then disregarded, its technicians were left for long periods of unemployment, and more than once it was asked to perform impossible jobs by Films Division officials unacquainted with film procedure. At no time in the year of war has any effort been made to mobilise the full resources of the documentary film movement to produce the maximum number of good films in a minimum of time and with a minimum of expense. The fault does not lie with the documentary film-makers.

Reference in the Report to the Government Cinematograph Adviser and the recommendation that this gentleman, who belongs to the Stationery Office, yet is attached to the War Office while being loaned to the Ministry of Information, be consulted in future on major questions of expenditure leads at once to the matter of official film records, for the safe-keeping of which this official is responsible. Enquiry reveals, however, that except for a small Army Film Unit which is largely duplicating the work of the newsreels, no film records are being made of this war of wars. Neither the R.A.F. nor the Royal Navy has a Film Unit. The fighting Services apparently refuse to recognise the value of the film either as propaganda or record, while no doubt the Enemy for his part is spending unlimited money and falsification on such films as *The Baptism of Fire*. Indeed, some of our own capable documentary technicians are foot-slogging in the ranks when they might be producing official films.

Finally, there is the problem of films for overseas. The Select Committee's Report deplores the negligence of foreign press attachés in failing to send back reports on Ministry films. But since when have members of the Diplomatic Corps been educated in film salesmanship? The Report recommends, as was suggested to the Ministry a year ago, and to that other interested body, the British Council, several years ago, that proper commercial representatives handle such specialised work. But what work? The Report mentions twelve films designed for show in the Empire and foreign countries only and, it is understood, copies of eleven films prepared for home use have had foreign language commentaries added. Is this all the Ministry with a ten months record of £86,422 expenditure can show for foreign propaganda? Its sob-sister, the British Council, has this year a grant of £71,800 for films specifically designed for overseas but these are, by gentleman's agreement with the Ministry, "cultural" films. They depict our war aims and war effort in terms of Oxford the City of Learning and a folk-song choral film as Britain's Reply to the Nazi Challenge. Its pot-pourri newsreel is preferred by the Select Committee to that issued by the Ministry, but if its items are selected from current British newsreels with the same delicacy as they were for the New York World's Fair, it will be a very peculiar and one-sided slant of the British people for neutral countries to stomach.

Perhaps, in the final count, the Report rings the bell when it says: "In the view of the Sub-Committee the work of the Films Division in the Home field has been largely ineffective through the lack of clearly defined objectives on the part of the Ministry." To "home" add "and overseas" and the matter becomes one that goes beyond film propaganda. It goes straight to the heart of the problem to which the only solution is a frank statement of what alternative Britain is offering to National Socialism. Let that message be given and the personnel, the weapons and the initiative are ready to carry it round the world.

DOCUMENTARY

COUNTRY NOTES

Lilium Candidum

In this column I have recently been writing, rather dully and drily, about bulbs. I warned gardeners that they might not be allowed to buy certain bulbs this year; and then, a fortnight later, was able to inform them that English bulbs were again placed upon the market. I then took the opportunity of advising them to plant the Salonika variety of the Madonna lily (Lilium Candidum); but had no space available that week to repeat a little anecdote about the Madonna lily which amused me very much when it first came to my notice.

Here it is.

The Madonna lily is an old favourite, so old indeed that it is mentioned in an eleventh-century herbal. John Gerard, who in 1597 published his *Herbal and General Historie Of Plantes*, refers to it as "our English white lily which groweth in most gardens of England." He further refers to it as "growing naturally in Constantinople and the parts adjacent, from whence we had plants for our English gardens, where they flourish as in their own country." By "parts adjacent," did John Gerard mean Salonika? He adds a romantic legend. He says that this lily was called in Latin Juno's Rose (*Rosa Junonis*), because it was reported that Hercules whom Jupiter begot on another woman, Alcumena, was put to Juno's breasts while she was asleep, and there fell away such an abundance of milk that one part was spilt in the heavens making the Milky Way, and another part on the earth, and from the part that was spilt on the earth sprang the lily.

This, however, is not the anecdote which amused me about the Madonna lily. The anecdote which amused me is more up-to-date than the eleventh-century or even 1597.

It appears that a few years ago (I have not ascertained the exact date), some enterprising gardener offered an example of our old cottage Madonna lily to the Floral Committee of the Royal Horticultural Society, in the hope of receiving some award. The Floral Committee was righteously surprised. It is more accustomed to examining the latest form of rhododendron from Bodnant or *Stenomessum aurantiacum* which grows only on the island of Estebes.

Surely thought the Floral Committee, the cottage lily must have been presented years ago?

On examination of the records, it turned out that it wasn't. And to the great honour of the R.H.S. the old cottage lily was belatedly given the equivalent of the R.H.S.'s Order of the Garter: the First Class Certificate.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST

THE MOVIES

"The Magic Bullet," at Warner's
"Amok," at the Academy
"The Fall of a Tyrant," at Cinephone
"Tom Brown's Schooldays," at the New Gallery
"Forty Little Mothers," at the Plaza

At one time films like *The Magic Bullet* and *Amok*—the first a biography of Ehrlich, discoverer of the famous "606" cure for syphilis, the second a drama arising out of problems of abortion—would have been banned and hacked, and shown finally in some dingy movie-hall specialising in "sensations." But attitudes as well as techniques have changed since then. *The Magic Bullet*, rather whimsically named, comes to us with all the authority of Edward G. Robinson in the chief part, and as Dr. Ehrlich this admirable creator of gangster roles enjoys a newly-won respectability. Not a blush will rise to the callowest cheek. So straight-forward and engrossing, so "unexceptional" is the treatment of the theme that one scene, in which Ehrlich lets drop the word "syphilis" during a silence at a dinner table, almost misses fire because the audience have come to share the film's detachment and the word fails to shock: Eliza Doolittle's expletive was a hundred times stronger. The climax of *The Magic Bullet* is reached, after endless experimentation, with the discovery of "606," the attacks of the medical profession, and the libel action in which Ehrlich's formula is finally vindicated. Many of the earlier scenes have taken the camera into lecture rooms, hospital wards and laboratories; we have watched the manipulation of test tubes and guinea pigs, peered down microscopes at the tubercle bacillus made visible by a new dye; assimilated, in fact, the elements of several long articles in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, with a lucidity which a is tribute to the expository powers of William Dieterle, the director. He has succeeded, quite remarkably, in focusing the attention of the average film-goer on facts of which most of us know nothing; and this documentation is in itself as fascinating as unexpected. The other great merit of the film—and we come here to Edward G.—is that there is not a moment which is not essentially dramatic and integral to the life of the man before our eyes. We follow him from his early struggles with hospital officials who frown on his experiments; he fights against tuberculosis and is eventually successful but infects himself with the disease for which he has found a cure; after a six month's rest in Egypt he returns to work at the Koch Institute; and there, as an old man at the head of a laboratory, he finally makes the discovery of "606" (it has taken 606 attempts to reach a solution). Mr. Edward G. Robinson splendidly looks the part at all ages, and to judge from parallel photographs which have appeared in the press he has succeeded in getting as near the original as is humanly possible. More important, the inner necessities of such a life, dedicated to science and the battle against suffering, are vividly suggested. We are impressed by the importance and modest exterior of greatness, without any of that toadying to the idea of a Great Man which as a rule makes such films insupportable.

Amok, I am sorry to say, is being circularised as "sensational" on the old lines. The label "A Certificate" has been changed to "Adults Only," and such headlines as "Has a Woman the Right to Kill Her Unborn Child" and "The Sensational French Film the Censor Banned" top the sheet to which critics turn to refresh their memories. One can sympathise with almost any effort on the part of cinemas to entice audiences in these difficult days, but it seems a pity that the Academy, to whom we all owe so much, should have to stoop to devices which better suit Leicester Square. And it's unfair to the film. Ozep, who has directed *Amok*, did a good deal better with *Brothers Karamazov*, but whatever faults his new film may have, a vulgar sensationalism is not one of them. *Amok* is a rather over-dramatised picture of the jungle in which everything is blamed on the climate. A mysterious white woman visits a French doctor (drink, fever, introspection) in an isolated village, and asks him how much money he wants to procure an abortion (she has been living with a lover and expects her husband's return). His pride is touched, he insultingly refuses. She goes to a local Chinese midwife and dies as the result of the operation. Then the husband turns up, suspects foul play and prepares to take the coffin to Europe for an autopsy. The doctor cuts the rope while it is being hoisted aboard, and he and the coffin disappear in the waves. No moral is involved, you notice, because the doctor would have performed the operation if he had been asked in the right way, and the only conflict we discover in the woman is a mask of suffering which makes the film monotonous. The acting (Jean Yonnel and Marcelle Chantal) belongs to the somnambulistic school. Nevertheless, when Ozep can forget the artificialities, the film contains brilliant episodes. The local colour at the beginning includes a Javanese dance which, though irrelevant, overshadows the rest of the film, the *boite* in the local town is alarmingly real, and throughout the camera follows patterns of light and shade, on a bamboo bridge, up a sunlit staircase, which are delicious to the eye. *Amok* is an unsatisfactory film which shouldn't be missed. As usual the natives turn out to be amazingly photogenic, and glimpses of the doctor's Javanese mistress make one wonder how he could ever have been enticed by a mysterious haggard stranger.

The other three films of the week—second choices or no choice at all—must be dealt with briefly. *The Fall of a Tyrant* has a tragic interest as the last Czech film made before invasion, and it is besides a respectable attempt to understand the nature of dictatorships. The Tyrant, with his programme of vast wars, is set against the figure of a Jewish pacifist doctor. Though it is not a very good film it has moments when—if one wasn't an Englishman in a London cinema—one would like to cheer. *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, with Freddie Bartholomew and the Dead End Kids at Rugby, will generate a sickly warmth in any old boy's heart. A good deal of public school spirit, of later date than Hughes, has been injected into the dialogue, and Sir Cedric Hardwicke leads the crusade against barbarism with a very native and convincing, but un-Arnold, air. But where is the glory that was Flashman? Where the drinking bouts, the battles with farmers, the great Derby sweeps? Though *Tom Brown* has never been one of my favourite novels, I confess I was disappointed.

Of *Forty Little Mothers*, with its new and reformed Eddie Cantor, I can only say that I imagine he must have been reading Patience Strong and liking it. WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, September 7th—
Service for Refugees and their English friends arranged by Christian Council for Refugees, St. John's Church, Smith Square, 3.

MONDAY, September 9th—
Opening of Evening Classes at Morley College.

TUESDAY, September 10th—
Ambrose Appelbe: "Housing Law," Housing Centre, 13 Suffolk Street, S.W.1, 1.

WEDNESDAY, September 11th—
Federal Union Lunch, William de Bellaing: "France Overseas," "The Falstaff," 1.
Concert by the Philharmonic Piano Quartet, St. George's Church, Bloomsbury, 8.
"The Millionaires," Globe.

FRIDAY, September 13th—
Mrs. Beatrice King: "Family Life in the U.S.S.R." 98, Gower Street, 7.30.

Correspondence

POLES AND JEWS

SIR,—The recent military agreement signed by the British and Polish Governments carries a new threat to the Jews—mobilisation within the Polish army. The outbreak of war brought to many Jews a new hope for restitution of their human rights. The formation of a new Polish Government gave hope to a number of Polish Jews that at last the country which is still their mother country may restore their rights to lead their lives as free men. They supported and joined the new army. But soon they learned their mistake. The new Government does not differ much from the old one—only the names have changed. The members of the new, just like of the old, are mostly men directly responsible for the fatal policy that led to the fall of Poland. Others came from the National Democratic Party of Poland (which changed even its name to National Party probably ashamed of the "democratic sentiments" of the early days), the party notorious for its reactionary policy, distrusted by workers and peasants alike. The army was still worse, its officers being drawn from the old military clique which ruled Poland or from Fascist and semi-Facist Youth movements and had soon given example of its anti-Jewish sentiments. How could one expect from these people a new policy towards the Jewish minority, a minority of 10 per cent. or more? True, there were some slight promises but the experience of 1914 to 1940 has taught the Jews what vague promises mean. How then can the Polish Jew be expected to fight for such a Government under such a leadership. The Polish Jew, the one who does believe that this war is fought for better justice is willing to fight but not in the Polish army of to-day, the very army which only two years ago was ready to go with Hitler and put its whole weight on the ultra nationalistic policy on the best Hitlerian example. It is not after all national pride we are fighting for but security and the Polish Jew, after twenty years of bitter experience, knows that neither this Polish Government nor the army will give him this security. Unless a radical change occurs—and this does not seem likely to follow—the compulsory calling up of Polish Jews to the Polish army will be one of the gravest injustices committed or allowed to happen by the British Government.

Wounds cannot be cured by mere promises or wishful thinking and the wounds inflicted by the Polish Governments on the Jews are very deep indeed.

29 Cathkin Road, ALFRED CUNARD

FÜHRERPRINZIP

SIR,—Mr. Inman has not read my review of Mr. Worsley's book with the attention it deserves. I never claimed to represent Socialist opinion; when I expressed an opinion it was simply my own, but, naturally, as I am a Socialist it was therefore the opinion of *a* Socialist. In many cases the opinions were not mine, but Mr. Worsley's, and though I agree with most of what he said, I made it quite clear that I thought his demonstration just a little one-sided, "for it does not allow quite enough place for other strands in the British social tradition."

Mr. Inman is wrong in saying that I object "to the public schools because they produce 'little Führers.'" On the contrary, I said that my objection to them to-day is that they produce neither Sahibs nor Socialists, and that the public schoolboy is an anachronism which has fallen between the two stools.

As regards the larger question which he raises of leaders and leadership, he misses the whole point of the democratic and Socialist objection to the Führerprinzip or sahibism. The Führer and the sahib claim and are given power on the ground that some are "born to command" and others "born to obey" either because of race, nationality, or class. The alternative to such a system is not, as Mr. Inman pretends, anarchy. No sane Socialist believes that society can do without "leaders"; my own view, as a democratic Socialist, is that leaders should be chosen for efficiency, irrespective of race or class, and that they should be ultimately responsible to the led.

May I add that I was educated at a public school and was for seven years of my life a professional sahib, but my experience has provided no evidence to confirm Mr. Inman's statement that people educated at public schools are more disinterested than those educated elsewhere. LEONARD WOOLF

THE SWASTIKA

SIR,—In a review in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION of August 17th, Mr. Leonard Woolf made the following statement: "It is an interesting fact that Kipling, the most distinguished advocate of the Public School as a breeder of little Führers, thirty years before Hitler realised the significance of the swastika as an emblem, for in his collected edition opposite every title page there is a reproduction of his autograph within a circle and surmounted by a swastika." The sentence lacks somewhat in precision but I think that the man in the street will understand it to mean that thirty years before Hitler the Swastika was an emblem of the doctrines which Hitler adopted later, and that Kipling was already a partisan of those doctrines. I believe that the two statements would be equally contrary to the facts. The swastika is an oriental symbol of great antiquity not originally associated, so far as I know, with any theory of Führerdom (if I may coin the word); and in 1921, at my suggestion the University of Dacca, of which I was then Vice-Chancellor, adopted it as one of the quarterings of its coat of arms, the other three being the lotus, the crescent, and the Tudor rose, of which the significance is obvious. It seems to me a grave injustice to attribute to the author of "Lest We Forget" a theory of totalitarian leadership which he probably loathed no less than I do, or Mr. Woolf does. Mr. Woolf is a writer who commands respect. Can he produce any evidence of his particular interpretation of the swastika as an emblem "thirty years before Hitler," and of the meaning which Kipling attached to it?

P. J. HARTOG

VICTIMISATION

SIR,—I am a victimised conscientious objector. My employers, the County Borough Council of West Bromwich, have decided, like many other local authorities, that those who exercise their legal right to refuse to serve in the armed forces are not fit to remain in their service. No considerations of past service or future value have been allowed to mitigate my sentence. Nominally I am not dismissed, but have been granted "leave of absence without pay for the duration of the war." To consummate this decision the Council has endeavoured to exact from me and my fellow-objectors an agreement almost unprecedented in effrontery. We have been asked to sign this:

> I hereby agree that in consideration of the Council forbearing to terminate my employment by due notice I will not seek to recover, by legal process or otherwise, from the Council any salary, wages, remuneration or allowances of any kind which might, by statute, common law or otherwise, be due to me from the Council during the period of my leave of absence.
>
> And I hereby further agree that I have signed this acknowledgment and entered into the undertaking herein set out of my own free will and consent, without pressure or duress of any kind.

The effect of it is clear enough: give up your legal rights or be dismissed. What an infamous lie, then, does it attempt to impose by its last paragraph! This agreement is about as free, and in many other ways reminiscent of, that other notorious "document" by which 19th-century capitalism tried to stifle the youthful trade unions.

The justification for discriminatory action against conscientious objectors in the local government service is difficult to find. To the argument that conscientious objectors would not be reliable public agents in wartime there is the answer provided by the tolerance shown in the Civil Service, and by the Government memorandum in which local authorities were very recently advised that "in this country no person should be penalised for the mere holding of an opinion, however unpopular that opinion may be to the majority." The debate at West Bromwich, typical of the proceedings in all parts of the country, threw little light on the problem. The only argument, repeated tediously by each speaker, was that conscientious objectors should not be permitted to gain advantages in salary or promotion over their colleagues in the forces. We cannot see what monetary advantages we could possess over soldiers in the employment of that majority of Councils which is making up army pay to the level of pre-war salaries, and the promotion objection could surely have been met by appropriate regulations.

No, it is not reason but emotion, not equity but prejudice, which has governed the action of local authorities. One may take it that the overriding care of such Councils should be the effectiveness of the national war effort. But, at a time when they are at their wit's ends to replace employees called up for military service, they have decided to dispense with the assistance of men who are highly trained for their jobs. We are now unemployed, and our experience so far seems to indicate that we shall remain unemployed. Local authorities will not take us, certainly, and when public bodies adopt such an attitude what is the private employer to do? We, from whom the community might deem itself entitled to maximum civilian service, are instead to perform no useful duty, but even to impede the national effort by living on public funds.

All these arguments should have been considered by the authorities, in their own interest, but the other aspect of the subject should be mentioned. Victimisation has caused some pacifist households very great suffering. In one family with which I am acquainted every able-bodied person has been thrown, permanently it seems, out of work. The most generous-hearted of men is tempted to cynicism when he sees those brave people starving for their principles, and recalls the late Prime Minister's assurance that, this time, there should be no persecution of conscientious objectors.

Realising that our trade union was our only safeguard against arbitrary action by our employers, we in West Bromwich applied to the National Association of Local Government Officers for assistance. By way of reply the Association approved a resolution that it should not assist members who were in difficulties because they were conscientious objectors. To our protests that this was directly contrary to earlier statements of policy came the hardly adequate explanation that conscientious objection had then been only "academic," and that now it was "practical" no protection could be expected. We have no means of recovering subscriptions obtained under a false promise of protection, but at least the facts should be known in order that present and prospective members of N.A.L.G.O. may judge of the assistance they are likely to receive when—O supreme sophistry!—their needs are no longer "academic."

PAX

FOOTBALL COUPONS AND PHOTO-ELECTRIC CELLS

SIR,—Those of your readers who read Mr. Ritchie Calder's most instructive article on the many uses of photo-cells may be interested to learn of yet another brilliant application which came to my notice and which opens up new vistas in the progressive elimination of human drudgery.

I refer to a Patent which claims to show a method whereby a winning coupon or coupons can be separated from the losing coupons. Coupons as some of your less puritanical readers may be aware are handwritten and 1, 2 or X are the symbols which the "investor" or "mug" writes in order to win a fortune and certainly in order to make the fortunes of the promoters. In a forecast of 12 matches, there are over 500,000 possible combinations and a forecast of 15 matches means that the chances against an accurate prophecy are 15 million! It must be borne in mind that the symbols may be large or small, may be in various inks with pen-strokes with varying thicknesses quite apart from the calligraphic idiosyncrasies of each punter. The Patent claims that the millions of coupons can be sorted at the rate of 10 a second or 36,000 an hour into winners or losers. The "magic-eye" is once again the explanation; as and when the symbols on a coupon tally with the symbols on the standard coupon (the master coupon inserted in the machine and having the correct results) that coupon is ejected into the winning compartment.

As far as my memory serves me, manual sorting is at the rate of 180 coupons an hour, so that the suggested machine would displace 200 sorters, not to mention their attendant supervisors, detectives, canteen workers, etc.

The patent has no history. The inventor offered to construct a machine for some of the promoters and was willing to be paid by results. These gentlemen, actuated no doubt by a lively sense of their duty to the community and their unwillingness to deprive their thousands of employees of a livelihood gained by pandering to "get-rich-quick" instincts, turned a deaf ear to this proposal whereby they could lose nothing, and the patent is still in cold-storage.

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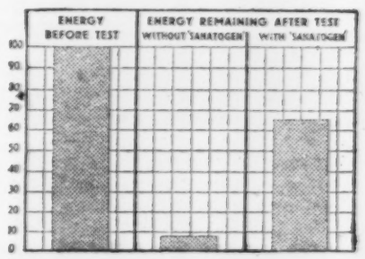

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The patent has been examined by many eminent physicists and seems sound, but until a government department realises the utility of sorting masses of documents such as Ration cards, Identity books, etc., at a great speed without their having to be transcribed to another piece of paper punched with little holes, I fear this promising device will continue to rot. A. PERELMANN, Ph.D.

28, The Southway, N.W.11.

FARMERS AND INCOME TAX

SIR,—In your comment on Farmers and Income Tax you point out the specially favourable basis of income-tax assessment that farmers enjoy and comment that "all this is to be put right." According to a recent statement in Parliament, however, the amending legislation on the subject is not to be introduced until next year's Finance Bill. This means that farmers will not begin to pay tax on the actual profits instead of the annual value basis until 1942. Many farmers will not start to keep accounts until the new law is on the statute book and in these cases the year 1942 will be well advanced before their accounts are available.

When the corn production legislation of the last war inflated farmers' profits the annual value basis of income-tax assessment was changed to double annual value. This would be a simple step to take now; if the Chancellor had adopted this method there need have been no delay and in any case where the double value basis was excessive the farmer would have had the remedy of producing accounts and claiming a reduction. The wage and salary earners cannot escape taxation as the full amount of their earnings is shown on their employer's returns and tax is now to be deducted at source from their remuneration. Why should farmers, most of whom make greatly increased profits in wartime, be allowed to get away with it?

The Treasury were obviously aware in September, 1939, that farmers would make higher profits owing to the war and amending legislation to meet this situation could have been introduced in Sir John Simon's second Budget of 1939. The opportunity was again missed in the two Budgets of 1940. Now we are told that next year's Finance Bill will deal with the matter, which means postponement of effective operation until 1942. Is this one more instance of the Government's tenderness to vested interests holding key positions in time of war? It looks very much like it. A. J. BROWN

Du Cane Court,
Balham High Road, S.W.17.

SIR,—Under the heading "Farmers and Income Tax" you appear to be trying to create the impression that farmers are now living in a kind of Eldorado. Perhaps my own views will interest you.

The Government, being in possession of all the facts, should know best, and in times like the present I hesitate a long time before questioning their policy. With little knowledge of import prospects, I believe our farming policy should be the maximum output from every farm. Utterances of Government spokesmen also appear to state this view, but Government policy does not allow of its fulfilment. Although knowing full well the sorry plight to which agriculture was forced to sink and that an enormous amount of expense must be incurred to pull it back, they seem afraid, for some reason, to incur this expense and instead hope that farmers by some ingenious proceeding will manage to do this and also satisfy their creditors on prices based on bare cost of production and lagging behind increased costs.

My suggestion to get maximum production from each farm is as follows:—

(1) The Government to take over farm stocks and fittings at a fair valuation.

(2) All debts at present outstanding should be taken over by the Government, to be repaid, free of interest, after the war.

(3) All future expenses and receipts should be met and taken by the Government.

(4) Each farmer should be appointed as a manager for the Government and paid on the basis of the rent of his farm.

(5) The farmer should state his requirements to the appropriate War Agricultural Committee and also produce audited accounts at stated periods.

The main requirements of farming are capital and labour; in my opinion the industry cannot carry further credit. A. V. BIRCHALL

Towthorpe Grange,
Market Weighton,
E. Yorks.

THE WAR OFFICE

SIR,—At the Fabian Summer School at Dartington, *Critic* was frightened by Brailsford about India. And far more frightened by Captain Liddell Hart about the War Office. Things might have been worse. Had the Army kept Captain Liddell Hart as its instructor *Critic* would have had good reason to be terrified.

"Astounding to each successive generation," says *Critic* summarising Captain Liddell Hart's lecture, "the immense, rhinoceros stupidity of soldiers." True, soldiers are often wrong when they prophesy. All the errors, however, are not theirs. The worst and most dangerous are not committed by them, but by such authorities as Captain Liddell Hart.

Less than three months ago the French Army was struck down in a lightning offensive. Captain Liddell Hart not merely failed to warn us of what was coming. Almost until the eve of the attack he was insisting on "the improbability of any successful offensive by either side on the Western Front." Such he boasted in an article in the *Sunday Express* on 18th February this year, was "one of the main conclusions in my last book." In the same article he reiterated his conviction, "No stretch of the imagination can find on either side now the potential means of victory in a total war." And again "now frontiers in the west are inviolate owing to the increased power of modern defence." No one could have been more wrong than was Captain Liddell Hart or more persistent in error. He is much too accomplished a journalist not to have made that crystal clear.

Others did not fall into his mistake. In *The Method of Defence* he wrote: "In the autumn of 1937 the then Chief of the Imperial General Staff in commenting on the result of the annual War Office exercise, touched on the prospects of the attack in modern warfare. While recognising that some of the attacks seen in exercises would not be likely to succeed in war, he affirmed his own belief that with adequate preparation and fire-power 'attack will always get the better of defence,' at any rate on a limited front. The difficulty in the last war had been to keep up the momentum after breaking into the enemy's frontier. But he believed the combined use of air and ground forces might solve this difficulty, and that the former would prevent the defender filling the gap. 'Our army must be trained for the offensive'." Captain Liddell Hart thought this false doctrine. We must, he warned us, "be scientifically on guard lest the wish that the offensive could succeed should father the unwarranted thought that it can."

To-day even *Critic* may find comfort in the thought that it was the professional head of the Army who, despite "the rhinoceros stupidity of soldiers," saw truth which was hidden from Captain Liddell Hart in the "fog of war." A. RHINOCEROS

THE MODERATOR

SIR,—In his review of John Buchan's *Memory Hold the Door*, your English reviewer jars on Scottish nerves in referring to Lord Tweedsmuir "in the trappings of the Chief Moderator of the Church of Scotland." The trappings were of course those of the Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly (appointed by the King as his representative), and much less impressive than the eighteenth century costume of the Moderator or chairman of the Assembly, who is always a minister.

High Manse, Airdrie. GRACE HAY

ON BUYING A LEMON

Sir,—Can it really be that your able writer who disguises himself under the letters Y. Y. seeks a meaning for that expressive phrase: "The answer is a lemon"? Has he never known the acidity of negation, disappointment or refusal? If he had, he would hardly ask for an explanation of those words.

Malvern.

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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

In evaluations of character by modern novelists, one of the strongest of human passions is often neglected. True, it is not also one of the oldest: for it may be said to have grown up with modern society or only to have assumed its present importance during the last three hundred years. The Elizabethans and their immediate successors knew very little of it. In their minds the possibilities of tragic action were still bounded by a few comparatively simple motives—ambition, revenge or sexual appetite; and not until we have passed the Civil War and entered a world that recognisably suggests our own—as drab almost, as complex and as overcrowded—does the new motive make its appearance in a work of literature. The passion for respectability is of recent growth. Yet how real it is, how lasting, on occasions how destructive! Half the crimes of passion of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have had as their mainspring not passion in the ordinary sexual sense (which the criminal in most instances has already satisfied) but the desire to escape from illicit love into respectable married life. Modern capitalism has created a gigantic class for whom conformity is synonymous with moral virtue, and security is the true foundation of personal happiness. Such a point of view already existed in the pre-Augustan period: and its prophet was Defoe, a man sufficiently close to the life of the people and conversant with the standards of a struggling *bourgeoisie* to realise that, if one exists always on the verge of wretchedness, in the grey half-world that divides the decently prosperous from the completely destitute, certain pretensions become more rather than less important, and that the determination to "keep one's end up" socially is an expression of the will to live.

Himself Defoe was a man of enormous energy who experienced considerable changes of fortune; and it is their remarkable vitality that distinguishes all the personages he created—their refusal to be downed by circumstance and the insect-like persistence with which they continue to scheme and shove. Both *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana* have moral endings—virtue is rewarded and vice, somewhat tardily, receives a rap on the knuckles; but in the last analysis each of them is an essentially amoral book. No wonder that George Borrow, lounging disconsolately across Westminster Bridge after days spent in wringing a livelihood from the Newgate Calendar (whence he had begun to imbibe "strange doubts . . . about virtue and crime") was shocked to see a copy of *Moll Flanders*, black, greasy, dog-eared, in the hands of an old apple-woman who sat on the pavement and to hear her describe its heroine as "the blessed woman." Her darling son, explained the apple-woman, was a transported convict; and through those eyes Moll's acquisitive and combative qualities shone with a lustre that was both unexpected and disconcerting. The protagonist's misdeeds were excused by her success and courage. Her criminal habits were not a psychological eccentricity—the idea of the *acte gratuit* derives from the well-to-do—but had behind them the impetus of a genuine social passion. Besides, Moll Flanders is an extraordinarily English character; and, as we read her story we are reminded again and again that England is the country where almost everyone is conscious of being a little better than somebody else. Moll thanks her stars repeatedly that she is not as other sinners; and, although through force of circumstances she lives in the present moment, she is supported by recollections of respectability and by the relics of a good education and a middle-class upbringing. Thank God, she "had been bred up tight and cleanly"! Among the thieves, fences and prostitutes with whom her lot is cast, she never loses sight of her own superior origins; and, when at last she finds herself committed to Newgate, what horrifies her is the indecorous squalor of her new environment: "the hellish noise, the roaring, swearing and clamour, the stench and nastiness. . . ." Later, the fact that most distresses her is that she, too, should so quickly have become acclimatised:

> I had a weight of guilt upon me, enough to sink any creature who had the least power of reflection left. . . . I had at first some remorse, indeed, but no repentance; I had now neither remorse nor repentance . . . . A certain strange lethargy of soul possessed me. I had no trouble, no apprehensions, no sorrow. . . . The first surprise was gone. . . . I was engulfed in the misery of punishment and had an infamous death at the door; and yet I had no sense of my condition, no thought of heaven or hell, at least that went any farther than a bare flying touch, like the stitch or pain that gives a hint and goes off.

It would be absurd, of course, to pretend that Defoe develops or builds up his heroine's character with the self-conscious artistry of a modern novelist. But because he understood her so well and delineated her background from first-hand knowledge, the character that does emerge has an astonishing sharpness. Primarily, *Moll Flanders* is an essay in story-telling—written, one imagines, at break-neck speed, with care for the picturesque quality of every episode: but there are few incidents that could be discarded without loss to the whole. Thus, the explanation of Moll's adventures as an adult is provided by a detail of her early youth. She had been a foundling, put out to nurse in the house of a countrywoman: and one day her foster-mother, coming into the room "where all the poor children were at work . . . sat down just over against me, not in her usual place as mistress. . . . 'Thou foolish child,' says she, 'thou art always crying.'" The little girl refused to be comforted: whereat—

> She began to be angry with me . . . Says she. . . . "Is the girl mad? What! would you be a gentlewoman?" "Yes," says I . . .
>
> This set the old gentlewoman a-laughing at me. . . . "Well, madam, forsooth," says she . . . , "you would be a gentlewoman; and how will you come to be a gentlewoman? What! will you do it by your fingers' ends?"
>
> "Yes," says I again, very innocently.
>
> "Why, what can you earn?" says she; "what can you get a day at your work?"
>
> "Threepence," says I, "when I spin, and fourpence when I work plain work."
>
> "Alas! poor gentlewoman," said she again, laughing, "what will that do for thee?"

Yet Moll's bold prediction is presently justified. She is adopted by the Mayoress of the town, reared among her daughters and, when she reaches puberty, seduced by the elder son. Here romantic passion, for the first and for the last time, puts in an appearance. He tells her that he loves her; "and my heart spoke as plain as a voice that I liked it." He promises marriage, then breaks his word and suggests that she should marry instead his younger brother. Her reply is magnificent in its plainness and brevity:

> "No, sir," said I, "depend upon it 'tis impossible, and whatever the change on your side may be, I will ever be true; and I had much rather, since it is come to that unhappy length, be your whore than your brother's wife."

But Moll Flanders is nothing if not an opportunist. Cynically or philosophically, she decides to give way: and Defoe's summing-up is a masterpiece of ingenious understatement:

> It concerns the story in hand very little to enter into further particulars of the family, or of myself, for the five years that I lived with this husband, only to observe that I had two children by him, and that at the end of the five years he died. . . . I confess I was not suitably affected with the loss of my husband. . . . He was a tender, kind, good-humoured man . . . but his brother being so always in my sight . . . was a continual snare to me; and I never was in bed with my husband, but I wished myself in the arms of his brother. . . . In short, I committed adultery and incest . . . every day in my desires . . . .

To re-read Defoe's narrative with attention is to despair almost of the future of the English language. In detail, there is much that is slipshod; but the general effect is one of accuracy combined with lucidity. The virile prose of the late seventeenth century can hardly be overpraised. It has outgrown the euphuisms of the Elizabethans and has not yet acquired the somewhat ponderous latinistic elegance that it was gradually to take on during the Augustan age. It is a *modern* prose, made to be spoken by modern people, and admirably suited to the description of a world of muddy streets, hackney coaches, shops, warehouses and hungry, hurrying passers-by. In that world—the universe of commercial London, shadowed by its brownish pall of "sea-coal" fog—there is little room for spiritual airs and graces, abstract speculation or poetic fancy. The men and women Defoe deals with have always their livings to gain; and his greatest novel faithfully reflects their standards. After her first experience of romantic passion (so nearly fatal) the heroine gives a wide berth to any form of excess or insobriety. She distrusts it in herself: she condemns and despises it when she sees it in others. She may not hesitate to go to bed with a drunken gentleman, rob him during the coach-ride of "a gold watch, with a silk purse full of gold, his fine full-bottom periwig and silver-fringed gloves, his sword and fine snuff-box," allow her "governess," the receiver of stolen goods, to do some quiet blackmailing, then agree to meet him again and become his mistress; but she is horrified nevertheless by his presumption and folly—"there is nothing (she reflects) so absurd, so surfeiting, so ridiculous as a man heated by wine in his head, and a wicked gust in his inclination together . . . ." She has the innate respectability of the typical prostitute.

Put *Moll Flanders* side by side with one of the Goncourts' novels: and the immense superiority of the earlier method becomes apparent. For the Goncourts envisaged *Germinie Lacerteux* (their own maid of all work whose secret they had happened to discover after her death) from the point of view of privileged dispassionate aesthetes. They look down into her life. Defoe seems to be looking up at us from that life itself—to partake of and yet transcend its confusion and drabness. Not for him the elaborate processes of aesthetic snooping by which the French novelists were obliged to refresh their imagination. As he writes, the wheels are thundering along the narrow streets: the kennels swim with mud: the rain-water gurgles in leaden gutters and splashes down on to the pavements of the commercial city. Moll Flanders is any woman carrying a bundle, looking from time to time over her shoulder, hurrying independent yet furtive through fog or rain. The least "imaginative," certainly the least literary, of English writers, Defoe is capable of a simplicity and force and eloquence that any modern novelist is bound to envy, while sudden flashes of imaginative insight redeem his commonplace. And not for a moment does he lose touch with the central drama—the tragedy of the little foundling who would be a gentlewoman and follows a will-o-wisp of social advancement through the London underworld, pursued by the spectres of degradation and hunger and misery. "It was all fear without, and dark within," she exclaims in a particularly moving passage in which she describes how she was tempted to commit a murder. Elsewhere—it might serve as epigraph to the entire bulky volume: ". . . The terror of approaching poverty lay hard upon my spirits."

PETER QUENNELL

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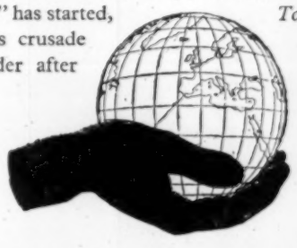

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ESCAPE OR DISCOVERY?

Mountaineering Holiday. By FRANK SMYTHE. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 12s. 6d.

I Bought a Mountain. By THOMAS FIRBANK. *Harrap.* 8s. 6d.

These two books, one by the well-known climber about a holiday in the Alps, the other by a Canadian who took up sheep farming in North Wales ten years ago, are good examples of the contemporary literature of solitude. As social history all of this literature is of great interest. In the flutterings of Mr. Nichols before his week-end daffodils, in the whole aesthetic week-end cottage and country restoration period, in the more serious books on country work, and finally in the mysticism of the mountaineers who stand surveying us from the tops of the Alps and the Himalayas and dismissing us as sordid, there is a symptom of our time. For a generation now, the derelict English countryside has been repopulated by the tired, the romantic and those who have found (like Mr. Firbank) that "city life" is unsatisfying, over-stimulating and frustrating.

To the simpler kind of critic of the movement, the English middle classes, and especially the small *rentiers*, were covering the pleasanter parts of England with *Petits Trianons*. Playing at shepherds and shepherdesses they had become guilty of the newly created crime: Escape. There was even a far-away suggestion that fashion would overtake them and that one of these days they might be shot while trying it. Not so far wrong either: they are bombed. But the truth is more complex. To those who have left the cities—and I refer the critics to that energetic sheep farmer, Mr. Firbank—the words "flight" and "escape," will seem ridiculous. Far from flying to the country, they would say, we are advancing upon it; the cult of solitude is one of rebellion, the cult of simplicity is revolutionary. We have protested and acted against a bad system. What no writer has mentioned, as far as I know—for most professional writers have had an eye on the profit motive and have dwelled amorously on the oak they have exposed and piously on their gardens—is the humdrum and significant fact that it is cheaper to live in the country. The return to the country has been driven by necessity. A truer analogy with the evacuation movement of the last 20 or 30 years is not the Trianon period at all, but the time of the growth of monastic life in the Middle Ages. Then, as now, it costs too much to live at Court.

A genuine if archaic community exists in the country and the war is revolutionising it. Mr. Thomas Firbank's book about his Welsh farm near Snowdon is about work and a successful struggle to strike roots; it is marred by no muddy nor fanciful contemplations. Loathing the mass production bench and the regimentation of his life, he left Canada, found this remote mountain farm and started in ignorance upon sheep breeding. I presume not in complete ignorance. He knew the difficulties and traditions vested in the mountain sheep which make it a very different animal from the sheep of the fat lands. But when he was blown by the gale and the rain along the Capel Curig valley—and it *can* blow in that valley—into the dark kitchen of Dyffryn to start a long reticent haggle over the purchase with the owner, he was a novice. One of the pleasant and sensible things about this book is its attractive drawing of the Welsh character. He had heard the usual stories about Taffy the thief and the Celtic boycotts, but he found himself among kind, generous neighbours. If the English were less timid themselves they would be less vulgar about the Welsh. The moment Mr. Firbank's neighbours saw that he was not the usual Anglo-Saxon gentleman farmer but had come to work, he ceased to be a stranger.

There is nothing so engrossing as the customs and technique of other people's trades. Here is the great duel of the valuation of the flock when he took over—and his fears when he saw his man looked more like a comedian than a valuer:

> The vulpine Johns would catch a ewe, obviously a fine one, and would show her sound teeth, her healthy eye, her clean hoof, her close wool, her good bone. Little Rowlands would counter by grabbing a specimen at the other extremity of condition, with broken teeth, pale eye, loose wool, light bone—all mountain sheep have sound hoof at home. The two men drifted to the wall again. Johns lit a pipe, Rowlands a cigarette. Their conversation—to the anxious watcher who would have been ruined at the outset by too high a valuation—seemed to become general. They talked of politics, of world affairs, of agriculture, of sheep farming in particular and at last of this flock. Now and then one of the two obviously made an offer, for a hand was held out for the other to strike in the time-honoured method of reaching a bargain. But each as yet scorned the outstretched hand. And at each failure the expectant crowd of men clustered about the old farmer [Mr. Firbank's opposite number] let out their pent breath in a hiss.

In the end, Little Rowlands came off best. He was an auctioneer of notorious eloquence; it was said that he could stir a crowd to enthusiasm for the back of an old hair brush.

Mr. Firbank takes us through the year, its seasons and its work. He has a fine feeling for the Welsh mountains. There is "the gathering" when the mountain farmers work together in rounding up the flocks. There are the lambing, cutting, washing, shearing and dipping and the annual sale. (One suspects of so spry a salesman that he was only playing at mass production in Canada. Factory work was, for him, a way of escape to deadness and laziness.) Each episode is rich in human beings. In contrast to the honest Welsh worthies appear a pair of English touts, a farcical Buchmanite Colonel who had ruined his life by "confessing" too much to his wife, and a nasty little Anti-semite, devoted to the Pyramids. They drank like fish. Mr. Firbank's is a refreshing document—but now he is regimented again, in the Guards. Simplicity was foredoomed.

Mountaineering Holiday is a readable mountain mixture for those who climb in Switzerland. There are good climbing pieces with less satisfactory pauses on the summit where we meet, not Mr. Auden's or Mr. Isherwood's Mother indeed, but Peace, Solitude, Nature and elevation above the "horrors of the machine." Mountain mysticism is a special branch of the pre-war solitude movement. What counts in the book is its description of a technique. As a climber Mr. Frank Smythe is a realist, a very experienced materialist. Perhaps the difference between Rousseauism and neo-Rousseauism is that the latter seeks the pains and dangers of Nature. There is Mr. Firbank digging sheep out of the snow for ten days; there is Mr. Smythe not "free" or "at peace" until he is daring Nature to break his neck.

V. S. PRITCHETT

ALLENBY

Allenby: A Study in Greatness. By GENERAL SIR ARCHIBALD WAVELL. *Harrap.* 18s.

Anyone picking up this book with the natural expectation that it will throw light on the political and strategic problems of the Eastern Mediterranean is likely to be disappointed. General Wavell was prevented by the outbreak of war from completing his work, so that the present volume comes to an end with the Turkish armistice of October, 1918. And there is no indication that Allenby was seriously interested, during the course of his Syrian campaign, in its political background. The implications of the arrival of three Jewish battalions from England are not discussed.

though we are told that after the capture of Jerusalem Allenby forbade the publication of the Balfour Declaration in Palestine. Nor is there any attempt to estimate the value of the Arab irregulars on the desert flank of the British forces. They too seem to have been regarded as an embarrassment; to one at least of Allenby's divisional commanders they appeared as "a pack of ragamuffins," and the military commander in Damascus, "who was not prepared to deal with delicate political problems," was disagreeably puzzled by T. E. Lawrence.

Not only in the account of this last campaign but also in the earlier chapters on the South African war and on the Western Front from 1914 to 1917, the book suffers as military history from too close a preoccupation with the operations in which Allenby was personally engaged. On the other hand it suffers as a study of personality from a too exclusive attention to military events. It has the narrowness of biography without its intimacy. For this defect, however, General Wavell cannot fairly be blamed; it is always difficult to reconstruct with any semblance of reality the life of a man so little given to introspection as Allenby appears to have been, particularly when he keeps no diaries and leaves no papers. And Allenby was abnormally inarticulate (his biographer prefers to speak of him as shy, a word which has been used to explain so many human pecularities that it no longer has any exact meaning). The fondness for flowers and birds and very young children, the "comparative silence and ineffectiveness" at military conferences, the violent explosions of temper which provided the rank and file with their caricature of him, all point to a mind which did not find words a natural medium of expression. General Wavell tells an astonishing story of an interview between Allenby and Haig which ended, although they had important matters to discuss, without a word having been spoken on either side. Allenby seems, furthermore, to have been exasperated by people who enjoyed the complexities of language, and his formidable anger was liable to break over any subordinate who failed to answer his enquiries tersely and unequivocally.

Nevertheless he managed to convey to cleverer men—partly, no doubt, by his magnificent presence and unwavering self-confidence—an impression of solidity, strength and even wisdom. Lawrence for instance, who first saw him as "a very large and superior general," afterwards wrote that "his mind is like the prow of the *Mauretania*. There is so much weight behind it that it does not need to be sharp like a razor." And his biographer has succeeded in passing on this sense of a monumental character, endowed with "absolute courage, moral and physical, strength of purpose and constancy, a high sense of duty, and a fine generosity of spirit."

Do these or other qualities justify General Wavell's sub-title? Since we are shown Allenby almost exclusively as a soldier, his title to greatness can only be determined by military criteria which a lay reviewer is scarcely competent to employ. But there seems to be a wide agreement in military circles that the Syrian campaign of 1917–18 gives him a strong claim to be regarded as the outstanding British commander of the World War. If this be conceded, it suggests certain reflections on British military technique in general. In the first place, Allenby was not conspicuously successful in France and Flanders, and only established his reputation after being given the opportunity of leading an expeditionary force in conditions which the training of the British Army since 1902 had led it to expect, but which it had not found on the Western Front. In a sense his campaign was an anachronism. A further reflection occurs in the detailed and

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damaging commentary on the third battle of Gaza recently published by Lieutenant-Colonel Garsia :

> The British force . . . of nearly 100,000 men possessed overwhelming superiority in both artillery and mounted troops. It was untrammelled by the need to hold extensive trench lines. It enjoyed the triple benefit which sea power conferred. And yet it required three months of preparation and three weeks of active operations to defeat, but not destroy, an enemy estimated at about half its strength (von Kress's figures place it at about a third) holding a front of 30 miles. Was this result satisfactory? . . . Are we to continue teaching the embryo commanders of our armies (as we have been doing ever since the last war) that if they, in their turn, succeed in emulating the feat just described they can rest satisfied?

Whether in fact, as General Bulfin urged at the time and the " Gaza School " has asserted since, Allenby could have destroyed the Turkish Army nearly twelve months earlier than he did by exploiting the breach made in its defences between Gaza and the sea instead of sending his cavalry on the circuitous and waterless route through Beersheba, is again a matter for experts to determine. But it must be said that General Wavell's argument in defence of Allenby's choice—that the losses suffered in making the western breach were twice as heavy as those sustained in the capture of Beersheba—is curiously unconvincing. The losses were suffered anyway, although the opportunity they had bought was not used; and on the other flank the capture of Beersheba was only the opening phase of a break-through which thereafter developed too slowly to trap the Turkish divisions.

Whatever the reasons, the destruction of the Turkish Army in Syria was not accomplished, despite its inferiority in numbers and morale, until the issue of the war had already been decided in the West. Was the man whose reputation these operations so greatly enhanced too cautious to make the most of his greatly superior force? Or is it rather, as Lieutenant-Colonel Garsia suggests, that the British technique of strategic planning leads inevitably to decisions which are both haphazard and unambitious? In either case the inferences are unflattering.

T. KNIGHTON

EVACUATION

Evacuation Survey. Edited by RICHARD PADLEY and MARGARET COLE. *Routledge.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Borrowed Children. By MRS. ST. LOE STRACHEY. *Murray.* 2*s.* 6*d.*

Discussions on evacuation, if they are to have any connection with reality, must take primary account of the military necessity which caused it and the strength of family affection and cohesion, round which, or in spite of which, the scheme has had to be carried out. Here lies the key to so many " evacuation problems." A sense of the military background of the scheme, even if the situation so conspicuously failed to come up to expectations, keeps things, by a balancing of alternative evils, in proportion. And a little understanding of the emotions of family life explains so much of foster parents' difficulties, evacuated children's anxieties and the unhappiness of that often forgotten class, the childless parents left behind alone in our evacuated cities.

There is no field where the point of view of the expert is so limited by the individual's personal experience as in the subject of evacuation. The Fabian Society are therefore to be congratulated on the production of their Evacuation Survey. Here is a collection of individually stimulating articles on various aspects written by a collection of people differing widely in their experience and point of view. But so well planned and edited is the Survey that the whole presents a well-balanced, comprehensive, and, in parts, fascinating picture.

Margaret Cole's introduction is both pertinent and witty. She remarks, for instance, that the " minds which conceived our evacuation plans were military, male and middle class." She might have added that those who had to carry them out were on the whole civilian, female and working class. Richard Padley, in his section on the National Scheme from the administrative point of view, has some rude things to say about the patchwork pronouncements and advice issued by the Ministry of Health, and about the lack of fight shown on occasions by the Board of Education.

Mental or Physical Security is the present choice before parents of very young children living in our evacuation areas. Gertrud Israel's admirable essay on " Under-Fives " shows that perhaps the best compromise is the evacuated Nursery School. It is significant that this type of evacuation, though so tiny a part of the whole, has been proportionately and actually one of the most successful. Of 3,458 under-fives evacuated, 2,715 were still in the Reception Areas after six months. The secret is that the children were grouped round staff known to them and known to their parents. In one case known to me the owner of the house in which such a nursery school is staying goes up herself to London every week to see the children's parents and tell them how they are getting on. Here is a real insight and understanding of what evacuation means to the mothers of young families, and here is really successful evacuation.

John Bowlby remarks, in his contribution on " some psychological aspects of evacuation," that in cases where it is necessary to send under-fives away " helpers and nurses should be appointed as foster-mothers to particular children instead of nurses to an institution." One hopes that this attitude may become more general in the conduct of our residential nursery institutions. The State is only just waking up to its responsibilities to its under-fives. Never has its lack of provision or understanding been more realised than in the acute problem of these children and their place in the evacuation scheme. Even that great life-line of the working-class mother with a young family, the Health Visitor, was largely withdrawn on the outbreak of war. Amy Sayle's chapter in the Survey shows how, by the absorption of Health Visitors into A.R.P. services, citizens under five in some great towns received more attention by being potential air-raid casualties than by merely being born or being very young.

Other essays that stand out are Fabia's clever analysis of a small market town's experience of evacuation and Lady Sanderson's story of a remote rural area's reactions to the influx of young Londoners, Joan Clarke's description of evacuated London and its closed schools, and Helen Bentwich's interesting essay on Secondary Education and the effects of evacuation.

Let anyone who is still tempted to talk about " the failure of evacuation " read Mrs. St. Loe Strachey's little book, *Borrowed Children.* In the first three chapters, from the unedited source of foster-mothers themselves, lies their answer. Here also is to be found the answer to some of the real, as opposed to many of the exaggerated, stories of evacuees' behaviour problems. By its realism and sympathy Mrs. Strachey's book should be most useful and most encouraging to teachers and foster-parents, and to all caring for evacuated children.

Statistically, evacuation has been a failure. But the figures have deceived many people about the true significance of this great social upheaval. It has incidentally given those who are responsible for helping the young and their parents a mine of information on which to build. And even if relatively small in numbers, those parents, foster-parents and teachers who have sacrificed so much will perhaps feel repaid in the pride they must have in the evacuated children of our great towns, their quick mental and physical response to a country life, their courage and their adaptability.

PEGGY JAY

AFRICAN PANORAMA

Behind God's Back. By NEGLEY FARSON. *Gollancz.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

With true journalistic knack Mr. Negley Farson has crammed into his book on Africa a little about everything. A journalist (you may know) is a man who undercuts his fellow-author, and the more skilful the journalist the wider the literary pitch he succeeds in queering. Since " we are all politically minded nowadays " his book (whatever the subject) will be streaked with politics: *Behind God's Back* is a last-minute tour of Africa on the eve of the war and we are let into all the problems, from native to Nazi, before the shutters go up. There is a darkest Africa still waiting to be reported: Mr. Farson obtained the necessary permits to interview the bushmen in " closed South-West Africa " and the gorillas in Belgian Congo. Jungle writing? Mr. Farson is ready with his paragraph to which Omborongbongo trees and Lord Dodo Russell add a Lear-like touch of fantasy. The personal angle? He got nearer to big game than most hunters, and travelled with his wife instead of the inevitable native boy. In this cross-country journey, Autobiography, Travel, History, Political Reporting — those ringed-off preserves of the publisher's catalogue —are traversed with a recklessness which will make the specialists boil. Conclusions are

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jumped at, the eye is dazzled by a sequence of first impressions. Any aspect of *Behind God's Back*, taken by itself, might be labelled superficial; and yet it is a brilliant, chaotic, contradictory, vivid, immensely readable book. The general reader—a more elusive quarry than buck or elephant—is stalked down from page one. Yes, Mr. Farson has a way with him.

His journey began with the waterfront at Walfish Bay (S.W. Africa) and one of those contrasts with which his book is packed: a straggle of cement blocks and tin huts washed by a chemical sea, where the hideousness of the view is balanced by the most beautiful women in Africa. The Herrero tribes had been massacred years ago by the Germans, and those left over commercially exploited, but while the men walked round looking like tattered scarecrows, their women were "birds of Paradise." Sex, in a slumping market, was gilt-edged:

> Their skins were an attractive light brown, not black. . . . They walked the sands like Victorian fashion plates. They wore scarlet and magenta turbans; their high-waisted dresses were pleated around slender torsos, and billowed and waved like plumes when they walked. Their necks were tall columns, ringed with rows of coloured beads or ostrich shells. They had tapering, aristocratic chins. It took twelve yards to make one of their costumes, of the favoured, flowered tobralco cloth—two months' wage for any "boy" on an up-country farm.

This, on the edge—as one official put it—of "miles and miles of sweet Fanny Adams."

Equally surprising, and delightful to the artist's eye, is the warrior race of the Masai in Tanganyika. They are not negro but nilotic, and to judge from photographs Mr. Farson's description of them as "the most beautifully built men in the world" is no exaggeration. In battle and in hunting these red-painted centurions with their buffalo shields are heroic:

> When the Masai hunt the lion with spears, they surround it, closing in with provocative shouts. The lion, switching his tail with anger, glares from one approaching figure to another. Finally he charges, in great pounces, like a cat. The Masai who sees the charge coming towards him, kneels down on the ground, spear ready, and *takes* the charge on his shield. He usually gets in his thrust—and, the next instant, the lion is a pincushion of trembling Masai spears. But the Masai who takes the charge is nearly always mauled, and very often killed.

All travellers, even the non-stop, hard-bitten Mr. Farson, dream of Edens and vanished worlds, and in such glimpses of the Masai, as in the Altimara cave paintings, another style and history are enigmatically revealed. The Masai add to their prestige by despising the white man. Other data: they are illiterate and cannot count, they drink the blood of their cattle by means of a tube inserted in the neck of the living animal, they practise fierce circumcision rites, and live in mud-and-dung igloos with floors of squelching cow-dung. Magic attaches to the heraldic shields, painted red, white and blue, and during ceremonious dances the sight of these shields will sometimes produce a murderous trance. The Masai have the power of hopping in the air without (says Mr. Farson) bending their knees to jump; "it was as unbelievable as levitation." Before the dances begin these formidable aristocrats wander about, arm-in-arm, or holding hands, with a girlish ease.

Such discoveries, the embodiment of a legend, and landscapes of nightmare beauty crowded as bazaars, form only a small part of the torrent of impressions which flutters off Mr. Farson's typewriter in brief zig-zagging paragraphs. The African native, whether fabulous warrior or expert mechanic, is perhaps the real object of a journey which took him to South-West Africa, the Cape and the Transvaal, and then by car from East to West along the tropics—Kenya, Uganda, Belgian Congo, the Cameroons. He found it impossible to general-

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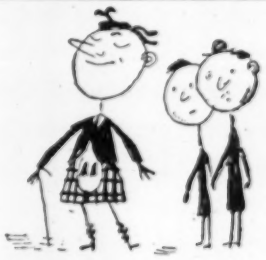

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His confident grin
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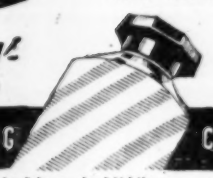

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ise. Some races of negro are as abject as poor whites, others educated and looking to emancipation, others broken by commerce, others ruled by their terror of the dead, others living in preserves like big game. Here and there, though, Mr. Farson lets slip a remark which gives them unity. Every negro, he points out, regards every European as a white man, and not as a German, an Englishman, a Frenchman or a Boer. That observation, which we may if we like set down to the simplicity of the negro, illuminates many pages in which looms the social and economic structure of colonial expansion.

For though, in a sense, the African negro is the hero of *Behind God's Back* (the title hints at Mr. Farson's attitude), much of the book is concerned with those who have supplanted, crushed, encouraged and adopted him. Sometimes the same settler or official may even come to love the "nigger" he exploits; and to represent this as a sentimental twinge of conscience is to miss the point. It would be truer to say that his affection mingles the love of the hunter for the beast he kills, and the nostalgia we all feel for lives (those of children, for example) simpler than our own. Mr. Farson met many Englishmen of all ranks and natures, and his comments on our national character as it stands up to the tests of empire-building and holding are exceptionally acute. The obvious weaknesses emerge: a man who would otherwise be an insignificant suburban tradesman cannot suddenly become an overlord, attended by a coloured retinue, without showing the crueller aspects of his vulgarity; the settlers have been succeeded by civil servants, and the result has been that the negro has become a symbol of endless documents passing to and from Whitehall. All that has been said in the past of retired colonels in Kenya, and the dinner jackets in the jungle, is admitted by Mr. Farson who goes on however to distinguish virtues which our own critics tend to miss. His general conclusion, stated at the beginning of the book and illustrated by later incidents, is that "the British *moral* attitude towards their African holdings and protectorates is above any except minor criticisms. Their economic conception seems—just absent. And, in their Colonial Service, the British will find the same faults they are now trying to eliminate, under the pressure of war, from their home Civil Service. If they do this with their African service, a new and vigorous life will spring up in Africa." An irony is added to this situation of a benevolent if tape-tied bureaucracy by the intrusion of power politics: the Germans whom Mr. Farson encountered in Africa were all active, unpleasant, and ruthlessly organised Nazis.

I have only touched on a very few points of Mr. Farson's book; and my excuse for reviewing it at all is that it is meant precisely for readers as interested and uninstructed as myself. *Behind God's Back* is the most vivid and haphazard collection of *choses vues* that has been published for many months. Of the author's heart, after finishing his book, I am not so sure—he seems always to be giving more of himself away than reaches the page. But his eye is unquestionable; wherever it turns, it has more facets than the fly's.

G. W. STONIER

NEW NOVELS

The Big Wheel. By MARK BENNEY. *Peter Davies.* 8s. 6d.

World's End. By UPTON SINCLAIR. *Werner Laurie.* 10s. 6d.

Twelve Chinks and a Woman. By JAMES HADLEY CHASE. *Jarrolds.* 7s. 6d.

There can have been no moment, since the invention of novels, when fewer people wish to read them. The desire for distraction is commonly supposed to increase in proportion as life becomes more harassing, but the reverse, in fact, occurs. Serious worry makes everything impossible except itself. Moreover, when ordinary living begins to provide many of the intensities and excitements for which people customarily go to books, a very exhausting pace is set for the literary entertainer. In theory, for example, a book by Mr. Chase should be able to compete with Hitler on his own ground. Mr. Chase is the toughest of all tough novelists—he is the author of *No Orchids for Miss Blandish*—and the Gestapo itself could scarcely improve on the methods of interrogation habitually adopted by his villains. In practice, one finds that one is indeed stirred, but not at all in the way that Mr. Chase intended. One is stirred by irritation. Reading one's way through these painstaking accounts of murder, rape and Chinamen having the ends of their fingers squeezed to pulp, one asks oneself—and would like to ask the author—if reality is not providing us all with a far better article, and a first-hand one? When interesting, important and innocent people all over the world are being murdered, and, what is more, also having their finger-tips pulped, is it really worth while to describe these processes as applied to imaginary, highly unimportant, and almost entirely despicable people? Can anyone who is aware of what is going on in the contemporary world pay the slightest attention to such superfluous pastiche?

I have placed Mr. Chase's novel last, because it is the least good of my three, but I think it might as well be dealt with straightaway. First I must give the author credit for at least one diverting character, Glorie. Glorie is a monumental, pearly nymphomaniac, the principal female character. She involves Dave Fenner, the hero and a private detective, in a terrifying affair with Key West gunmen (in which, as I have hinted, there is a detailed death almost per page), because she wishes to wreak an infinitely tortuous revenge on Carlos, a gangster who had murdered the one human being she genuinely cared for, a Chinaman capable of practically non-stop sexual congress. The following is a good example of Glorie's behaviour. She has arrived uninvited at Fenner's hotel in the early morning. He has a hangover. She takes off her clothes, kicks them in the air.

> Her body had the splendour of clean-cut marble and the lustre of a pearl. Fenner said: "Very, very nice. Some other time perhaps . . ." Glorie giggled and began dancing round the room. She sprang up on a chair and posed. Fenner thought she was the most beautiful piece of corruption he had ever seen. She threw her arms up in the air and laughed at him. "Like me?" she said, "Think I'm cute?"

Fenner remains obdurate:

> Glorie stepped down from the chair. . . Her eyes began to lose their lustre. She came over to the bed and sat very close to him. "Are you a man?" she said, hoarsely.

And so she goes on, night and day, indoors and out, and it's really rather funny. Nevertheless, it is not a book I can whole-heartedly recommend.

Mr. Benney's *The Big Wheel* is a book that I can. He, too, writes about tough people, but he does it the right way; that is to say he doesn't try to outdo the daily press in horror incidents, and his characters are not just human revolvers. His novel is about a neurotic, successful young journalist who is seen through the eyes of his secretary, a somewhat highbrow ex-burglar of the same age. The most impressive character in this book is also a woman, Phoebe Summers, a fence, sports promoter, bookie and night club proprietor, a kind of Soho gangster queen. Unlike Glorie, she is an integrated, living personality. Eric, the journalist, has a passion for transforming his earnings immediately into possessions: he adores expensive gadgets, particularly if they look as if their purpose is other than what it is. He is a tortured, mercurial, vain creature, in spiritual bondage to Phoebe, whom he hates and fears and yet cannot help obeying. All in all, he is an entirely convincing creation. Eventually he murders Phoebe, and perhaps the only weak part of the novel is his decision to convict himself of the crime in an increasingly revelatory series of scoop articles. This is almost too much for the reader to accept, but at the same time Mr. Benny has built up Eric's fantastic character so judiciously and with so much imaginative insight, that one ends by accepting it. The novel contains several remarkable figures, Phoebe's son amongst them. He is a childlike, enormous, punch-drunk boxer, devoted to Eric, and his vocabulary is authentic and very interesting. Here he is replying to a question:

> "You mean they used to live together?"
> "That's right, china. Before Eric came to this 'ere gaff. 'E went case-o one night, en she 'eard about it, en there was a bundle."

Mr. Benny knows the *real* Cockney and prison idiom (the language of the "wide boys"), and it contributes much to the pleasure of reading him. After the torrents of Americanese we have been subjected to for so long, it is most inspiriting to read its English counterpart for a change. Moreover, it possesses rich, peppery, eighteenth century echoes, which the American does not. The secretary (narrator of the story) is another excellent portrait. His mother had been a kind of Phoebe; yet she had tried to bring him up as "a little gentleman."

> . . . striving to reconcile the rival conceptions of life offered to me (I) had decided to become a "gentleman crook" . . . Always the fundamental object of my burglaries had been to win my way back to acceptance by the Phoebes—to force their respect, to share their expansive, explosive life. . . I was aware of gentlemen as a shadowy ambiance of "mugs" into which . . .

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one made predatory excursions, then scurried back to the reality of Soho. . . So long as gentlemen remained for me either mugs or fictions I could both hate them and believe that I was one of them.

He goes on to say that—

. . . it was with the keenest satisfaction that I heard, while crouching outside the door of an occupied bedroom, somebody snore in a distinct Oxford accent.

I will conclude by saying that I find Mr. Benny a valuable asset to contemporary English writing. He is the one man who really understands our "low company," and he has the talents and gusto to describe it. He is going through a period when he is a shade too fascinated by words—"mnemonic," "criminous," but that will doubtless pass.

Mr. Upton Sinclair is an indefatigable man. I cannot help suspecting that, at heart, he doesn't like writing novels. "Well, if I put it in the form of a novel, they'll at least read it, and I'll get the ideas into them that way," is what one feels he says to himself. I hasten to add that I should be very sorry indeed if the foregoing puts anyone off reading *World's End*, because, although it will only appeal to persons with certain particular interests, it will suit such persons very well. Notwithstanding, it is one of those novels that is constructed from events backwards to people instead of from people towards events. It is a very long novel, the history of a prepossessing and altruistic young American's upbringing and European travels between 1913 and 1919. If you like a slowish, competent, discursive narrative, which includes real people under their own names (Isadora Duncan, Zaharoff, Lincoln Steffens, Rodin, Bullitt, Wilson); descriptions of Christmas in East Prussian castles; descriptions of the South of France; English country houses; American munition kings' houses, etc., it is very much your book. Lanny Budd, the young American, is a charming, inquisitive, sensible type and the theme of the book is his intellectual journey beyond the conscienceless acceptance of fishy riches and his father's ruthlessly individualistic standards. The two poles are admirably represented by the father, Robbie, and the uncle, Jesse. Both these men see through the patriotic façade erected by France and England to disguise the real issues of the Great War, but whereas the father tries to induce Lanny to take advantage, as the heir to a great armaments firm, of the society's self-destructive tendencies, the uncle holds before him the ideal of international socialism and goodwill. There are some admirable sketches, towards the end of the volume, of the Paris of the Peace Conference, with the little band of American liberal officials at the Crillon fighting a losing battle against the stupidity, desire for vengeance and greed of nearly all the delegates. Anyone who thinks he would like to read *World's End* should remember that Mr. Sinclair's style is hardly sparkling or concise. Talking of Lanny's education, and voracious appetite for books, we find this:

In this plight Lanny sought the friendship of one Jean Racine, who had died more than two hundred years previously but lived on by the magic of the printed page.

And this:

Also Lanny won the friendship of a severe and stern spirit by the name of Pierre Corneille, etc.

But such failings are not of very great consequence, and there is a quantity of out-of-the-way information and political scandal to make up for it. The Briey Basin affair, for example, is excellently outlined, and takes its place in the story with considerable effect. Finally, few people of sense will quarrel with the conclusions Mr. Sinclair, and Lanny, derive from twentieth-century history.

BRIAN HOWARD

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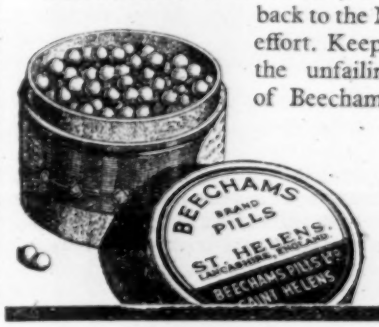

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PROOF OF IMMORTALITY?

Nothing Dies. By J. W. DUNNE. *Faber.* 3s. 6d.

In this book Mr. Dunne restates shortly the theory of time and immortality which has already been expounded in *An Experiment with Time*, developed in *The Serial Universe*, and supplied with a religious backing in *The New Immortality*. Little is added, though three chapters from *The New Immortality* are reprinted, but the exposition is now addressed more particularly to those "who wish to know, merely, without mathematics, what it is all about." I confess myself to be of their number and I understand, as I have understood before, that "what it is all about" is an analysis of time and self-consciousness culminating in a proof that in respect of part of ourselves we are immortal and inhabit a four dimensional world which we experience in dreams, albeit brokenly. This is because we bring to bear upon the dream world the jumpy and specialised mode of attention developed in waking life which has been drilled to concentrate on forward progress, instead of being able to look forward or backward at will. Yet even in dreams, if we choose to master the requisite technique, we can even now control our experience, combining and recombining going backward and forward, even creating experiences for ourselves. The immortality which Mr. Dunne promises us is conceived as an eternal continuance of the dream experience that we can enjoy now. So much, I think, I understand.

Understanding so much, why do I not accept what I understand? I have been searching my heart for an answer—my heart rather than my head—for Mr. Dunne is rather apt to put up the backs of professional philosophers both by his continual harping upon their stupidity and by the immensity of his own claims—"Despite that table's" (a diagrammatic table indicating the nature of human experience) "comparative simplicity, it appears to be capable of sorting and arranging in correct relations all the knowledge that is obtainable in every science and in philosophy" (one is glad of the saving grace of that "appears"), and I must do my best to be on my guard against professional prejudice.

First, though I understand Mr. Dunne's assertions, I still fail, in spite of the absence of mathematics, to understand all his arguments. Take for example the following which is the conclusion of the proof of immortality: "Thus the sense data, the appearance of which is paralleled by brain-Action, remain, though without the intensity centres contributed by B_1, before you for ever—after B_1 has passed that end of the A_2 stretch where your brain is in a (cross-sectional) state of disintegration—the state which we call, mistakenly, death." Admittedly it is unfair to expect comprehension apart from the context, but having had the advantage of reading the context, I am still crassly uncomprehending. Now this may be a reason of prejudice, for my heart does not like to think that my head is thick.

Secondly—and here the head comes into the picture—I have every sort of philosopher's argument to bring against the arguments I do understand. Take, for example, what Mr. Dunne has to say about sense data, an expression which he uses to designate what we immediately observe. First he assumes without question that they are not physical, simply because, while they have colour and temperature, the world of atoms and electrons which physics explores contains neither. And therefore? Therefore they must be classed as "psychical." But why should "the physical" be limited to the world which physics affirms? And why are the plain verdicts of common sense set aside without comment? When I see a red pillar box, for example, my seeing (the sensation) is different from what I see (the sense data)—the former is not red, while the latter is. Mr. Dunne takes no cognisance of the whole realist movement in modern philosophy which affirms with good reasons that the objects of our sensory experience are never the same as the sensations we have of them. I find it still more puzzling to be told that these allegedly psychical occurrences—Mr. Dunne's sense data—are "four dimensional" and to be assured that this "has been proved definitely by experiment." How, one wonders, can a *mental* event have any dimensions, let alone four. Mr. Dunne has a number of ingenious arguments to show that time, mass and space are all regressive. These lead him to the view that the universe as a whole is regressive, is in fact the *Serial Universe*. Truth, then, is also regressive and philosophers are denounced because they erroneously suppose to be fixed and absolute "that which recedes along the ladder of an infinite regress." But Mr. Dunne does not think of applying this view of truth to the truth of his own theory, which he regards as absolute and fixed, in fact, as true in the old sense of "truth." More important is Mr. Dunne's conception of "the observer." The theory of immortality derives initially from the fact that I not only know the world, but am conscious that I know it. Now the self that knows the world is different from the self that is conscious of the self that knows the world. The first self has the world for its field of vision; the second both the world and the self that knows it. There is an infinite number of these "selves" each with its appropriate world. Now Mr. Dunne treats each of these observers or "selves," as if it were a real, at times even a separate, existent, from which it follows that, even if one of them goes out of existence because of the destruction of the brain with which it runs parallel, an indefinite number of other selves survive it. This seems to me to be an error; it is an error to suppose that the self which in self-consciousness is conscious possesses a substantive existence other than the self *of which* it is conscious. Mr. Dunne's serial observers are not in fact real entities but the hypostatized figments of thought. I offer these criticisms with the diffidence born of my consciousness that *they* may be born of my thick-headedness; indeed, were it not that I have heard them suggested by other philosophers I should not have ventured to offer them at all.

C. E. M. JOAD

Boethius. Some Aspects of His Times and Work. By HELEN M. BARRETT. *Cambridge University Press.* 7s. 6d.

Most persons of education have at least heard the name of Boethius, without perhaps knowing much about him, except that as the Roman Minister of a Barbarian king he was, by an inexplicable aberration of that otherwise noble ruler, thrown into prison and executed, leaving to posterity a work, the *Consolation of Philosophy*, which became the most popular book of the Middle Ages. Yet Miss Barrett is right in saying that he is "a man who ought not to be forgotten" by an age which is witnessing, as his own did, the crumbling of civilisation before barbarism, and innocence everywhere persecuted. His "noble attempt to construct a vindication of divine justice in the face of moral anarchy" has something in it of permanent interest, for his is perhaps the noblest of all the noble prison books, which include Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and Raleigh's *History of the World*. Miss Barrett gives a lucid explanation of the circumstances in which Boethius was condemned, explains the philosophical background of the *Consolation* and examines its argument. In particular she discusses the question, which has puzzled many scholars, as to why Boethius, a Christian, should seek his consolation in philosophy rather than in religion and should spend his last days in the composition of a book which breathes throughout a noble theism but not a trace of Christianity. She comes perhaps as near as anyone can come to a satisfactory answer.

About Motoring

FINDING YOUR WAY

A SCANTY petrol ration limits many owners to familiar roads near their homes, but many thousands of us still travel far afield on the supplementary fuel issues granted to persons engaged in essential services; and unless we use our wits and take special precautions, it is absurdly easy to waste both time and fuel in a strange area from which all road signs have vanished, and wherein questions from strangers arouse the keenest suspicion. The problem can be quite difficult. Only the half-inch maps are sufficiently portable to serve us on long journeys, and they display a sad lack of detail. Plain Mr. Smith may have a job of the greatest importance connected with aerodromes, but the display of his identity card and driving licence will not satisfy chance-met strangers of his bona fides. At night when armed sentries are apt to be a little jumpy, and are often easily overlooked, real peril may arise, and quite a number of innocent civilians have been killed and wounded through failure to perceive a control and to effect a prompt stoppage; this danger will increase as the hours of darkness lengthen, unless overlapping barriers with a triple rectangular slow-speed gap are employed.

So the motorist should prepare for any journey through unfamiliar country, especially where secondary roads or lanes are involved, by preparing his private route card; and even if he finds the purchase of some 1in. map sheets essential, he should not shrink from it; after all, each such sheet covers nearly 500 sq. miles of land and water, and the scale is sufficiently detailed to solve every emergency, even in narrow lanes. He may, or may not, be able to procure typewritten route sheets from the A.A. or R.A.C. at short notice; their standard sheets are mass-produced, and are partly based on the removed direction posts, though moderately lucid even when those posts have disappeared. He should carry a compass. The use of a watch as a compass should not be relied upon, as the sun is not continuously available, and a man in a hurry can make all sorts of blunders with regard to Summer Time. He should carry any document which proves the duty and necessity of his travel. For this purpose both the identity card and the driving licence are useless in most instances; but since he will be motoring on national service, he should be able to procure an official letter on official paper signed by high authority; and he can display this to anybody whom he questions about his route, as well as to anybody who may be inclined to interfere.

At night certain additional measures are desirable whenever they are possible. When one's gaze is concentrated on an unknown and dimly lighted road ahead, it is ridiculously easy to overlook a road control of the common makeshift type. When the car is shut because of wind or rain, it is difficult to hear a shouted challenge. The car should have its windows down when the driver is alone. Whenever possible, a companion should be taken. The companion can be of infinite assistance in route-finding, while the driver attends to the sufficiently arduous job of keeping the car on the right part of the road. He or she can notice turnings which the driver would overlook; keep track of the route card and the speedometer (without which the route card loses half its value); and be kept on the alert for controls and challenges. If the companion can read a map, so much the better. The merest smattering of map-reading ability will atone for the absence of half a hundred signposts. In level country, for example, a cathedral spire may be sighted from a great distance, and furnishes a definite lead. In hilly country the map reader can deduce that from the summit of a rise the town of X—— should be visible on a certain compass reading; or that by

roughly following the general line of a railway or a river the destination will be attained.

In heavy rain and strong winds both sight and hearing are impaired; and one or both of the front side windows should be kept at least partly lowered, especially towards dusk and at night. This may mean that the driver must revert to the obsolete habit of wearing a waterproof coat inside his car, as all did in the old days of open cars; but anything is preferable to getting lost or being shot by one's defenders.

So far as threading strange towns and cities is concerned, certain road books contain simplified street plans, and the A.A. can supply on loose sheets a street plan of every town in the British Isles. As the route card compiled from a common half-inch map will simplify all main road travel, the addition of a 1in. sheet covering any divergence into lanes (e.g., to visit an aerodrome) completes a satisfactory daylight equipment. Nothing but a really serious emergency should tempt a motorist to face twenty miles of lanes or secondary roads in unfamiliar country after dark. He is sure to get lost on moonless nights, and to waste much time even under a good moon, especially as he will meet nobody to ask, except excitable parashots, bursting with zeal, patriotism and suspicion.

R. E. DAVIDSON

Week-end Competitions

No. 552

Set by Thomas Smallbones

Most competitors will remember Clough's poem, *The Latest Decalogue*, which begins:

Thou shalt have only one God; who
Would be at the expense of two?

and contains the well-known lines:

Thou shalt not kill; but needst not strive
Officiously to keep alive.

The usual prizes are offered for a new version of it to be called *The Totalitarian Decalogue*.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, Sept. 13th.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 550

Set by G. W. Stonier

We offer the usual prizes (two guineas and half a guinea) for a sonnet addressed to your favourite film star.

Report by G. W. Stonier

How many sonnets! What a galaxy of stars! To begin with, this competition provided a census of readers' tastes. The favourites were: (1) Charlie Chaplin, (2) Donald Duck, (3) Garbo, Deanna Durbin, (4) Charles Laughton, Shirley Temple, Marlene Dietrich, George Arliss, Gracie Fields, Basil Rathbone, Laurel and Hardy. Besides these, twenty-one other film stars ranging from Dorothy Lamour to Harpo Marx received the tribute of a single sonnet. I am astonished by the variety of liking, by the popularity of English actors and the comparative) unimportance of sex-appeal. In some cases, of course, competitors may have found it easier to address a Snow-white or a George Arliss rather than the focus of more intimate thoughts; but on the whole—to judge from the poems themselves—this list represents fairly accurately the enthusiasms of N.S. competitors. If instead of setting this competition I had been entering for it I should have written) with trepidations, a sonnet to Bette Davies, or, losing nerve, I should have tried my hand at an Annabella (Clair period), a Ginger Rogers, or—a childhood flame—Nazimova. None of these goddesses, I was disappointed to find, except Ginger Rogers, appeared to be anyone's favourite.

Now for the sonnets themselves. Too many were moulded on a grand manner—

Chaplin, thou shouldst be living at this hour
And so thou art . . .

But to be successful for more than a line or two he thing must be done *lightly*, tapering off to an inconspicuous elegance; several entries rather hammered at their effects. Not that there is any objection to manner in itself or to conceits provided they are witty. I liked this couplet in D. M. Mitchell's "Rosalind Russell":

Your eyes that twinkle like the star
That Hollywood declares you are.

There was an agreeable touch, too, in the last line of "To Mickey Mouse," from "Fleapit":

We are the prisoners a Mouse befriends.

Here are a few other passages which caught my eye in sonnets which failed to sustain the full fourteen lines. Shirley Temple:

Threatened more sternly by each pressing year
We need not fear to see your fame grow dim
Nor watch the apotheosis of the Little Dear
Suffer the lengthening of each dimpled limb;
Ousted, not by some rival of the stage
Nor second childhood, but the Awkward Age.
(Susanne Knowles)

Laurel and Hardy:

Many admire the contours of Mae West,
Or Dorothy Lamour in leopard skins,
But of all human curves the first and best
Is Olly Hardy's row of double chins.
(J. C. B. Date)

Two Chaplins:

A battered bowler, lacking half a brim,
A swagger cane, an ancient morning coat,
Two bulging shoes, each like a cargo boat,
With outsize trousers round a waist-line slim,
Those with a poker face whose upper lip
Two smudges darken, mock moustachios,
Model for those beneath a Führer's nose . .
(G. F. Plant)

. . . Hail! Victor in a hundred well-funked fights!
Hail! Willing victim of Love's fatuous fire,
Fount of sweet laughter, mixed with bitter tears,
Arthritic athlete, dandy rag-bedecked,
Hoper of Hopes that tremble into fears,
Schemer of schemes predestined to be wrecked!
(H. D. Waley)

Several primroses by river brims were discovered: in particular F. E. Puxon's "Zasu Pitts" and J. L. M.'s "Alistair Sim." It has been more than usually difficult to allot the prizes in a competition which produced a good level of entries but few pinnacles. On the whole I think Miss Jenifer Wayne deserves the first prize for her Jack Hulbert, and Fan-tail for his Robertson Hare.

FIRST PRIZE

Jack Hulbert

Not Gable's shirt-front, nor the smooth
Impassioned courtesy of Boyer's art,
Nor chic Chevalier, nor Flynn, can soothe,
Though god-like, every craving of my heart.
How can a tousled Donat, or a flash
Of Fairbanks' (jnr.'s) grin fill all desire?
Each has his key-note—Colman cuts the dash,
Howard shows brain, Olivier smoulders fire.
But there is one who overtops all these:
At home astride the camel, with the Fleet,
In perilous angles on the ice at ease,
Or at the dance with distant-flashing feet
Gallant, immaculate. And his shadow, long
And self-directed, fades out with a song.
(Jenifer Wayne)

SECOND PRIZE

No favoured Beauty does my sonnet blaze,
No female star that studs the filmy sky,
Venus must bow herein to Mercury,
Whilst I a wistful humorist may praise.
That high bald brow bewrinkled with amaze,
Those rolling notes that form "Calamity,"
Or deprecating "Do not rattle me,"
Or some burr-sticking antiquated phrase—
Who that has seen and heard could fail to smile,
Or neath his breath suspire a loud hurrah
That life retains such subtle jollities!
Thus watching how the Mug gets o'er the stile,
Who would not sense the de te fabula,
And see in Hare the Rabbit himself is?
(Fan-tail).

Prize for a SHORT STORY

Readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION *are invited by The Regent Institute to accept a prize offer which must appeal to everyone who is interested in short story writing.*

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* * *

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If you submit a story you will also receive a free expert criticism and a copy of the Institute's prospectus, which describes the varied field of opportunity for the new writer, and gives particulars of the courses in article and short story writing conducted by that well-known correspondence school.

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Enclose 6d. in stamps. You will appreciate that in present conditions it is necessary to make a nominal charge towards the cost of this valuable offer.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

[Cynicus is on holiday this week. Our industrial correspondent deals with the financial side of air-raid damage and evacuation, the employment situation, and problems of export.]

The 800,000

A total of 800,000 unemployed at the end of a year of fighting is unpleasantly large. There are, however, certain deductions to be made for purposes of comparison with an average pre-war month. The August total is inflated, not only by the usual crop of school-leavers, who account for a rise of 22,000 in the number of unemployed juveniles, but also by more than 60,000 women not normally on the register who have volunteered for war work, but have not been absorbed. As against this, it has to be borne in mind that the restrictions imposed on the supply of materials to the home consumers' trades have so far produced only a small effect on the volume of employment and that, as these restrictions are stiffened up in the near future, a large amount of unemployment will be caused in such areas as the East Midlands, which specialise in hosiery, boots and other products likely to be seriously affected by shortage of supplies. Moreover, if further evacuation of factories takes place from exposed areas, more unemployment will be caused; a large part of the labour displaced will not be at all easy to move to other areas. Apart from this difficulty of movement, training and dilution of skilled labour will have to be carried much further before there can be big openings for additional female labour on munitions, except in a few areas; and the unemployed include a large number of men who are not fit for heavy labour, which is most in demand because the great majority of the younger able-bodied labourers have been taken into the army. All this indicates bad planning in the geographical allocation of orders and in preparing for the labour-demands of war by training.

The Financial Side of Home Defence

When people's homes are damaged by air-raids, but are capable of repair, the victims want them repaired as soon as possible But as matters stand these householders are in a very unfortunate position. If they make their own arrangements for repair, they can make no claim to be compensated until after the war, and then only at a maximum rate calculated at pre-war prices—that is, at very much less than the present cost of the repairs. If, on the other hand, they call on the local authority to use its power to repair the damage, they are in at best for a long wait. There is also the risk that premiums may not be given, and the further contingent risk that they may even be called upon to repay to the local authority at some future date the difference between the actual cost of repair and the sum allowed as compensation. With this problem goes another —that of people ruined by the loss of home and business, not through air-raids, but through evacuation of dangerous areas. These people can at present ask for deferment of rents, rates and certain other obligations, but only for deferment; and the more claims there are under this head, the higher will become the rate burdens falling on the diminished band of house and other property owners who still remain in occupation in the danger zones. Here are three sets of hard cases for which provision ought to be made at once.

Export Problems

Politically the co-operation between Britain and the United States "rolls along." But on the economic side the trend of British export trade suggests that there is real danger of friction. Between April and July British exports fell by 35.4 per cent. and imports by 20.9 per cent. In so far as the decline in exports is accounted for by the switch over to munitions of the raw materials and productive capacity originally designed for export trade but temporarily required to make up the losses of equipment in Flanders, it is neither serious nor permanent. But at least half the decline is accounted for by the loss of our trade with Continental Europe. If we are to replace these lost markets and obtain the necessary foreign exchange for our purchases, we must substantially expand our sales in other markets. We can hardly do so without entering into severe competition with United States manufacturers who are already suffering in the same way as we are from the loss of European markets. After allowing for invisible exports we are running on an adverse balance of payments of around £400,000,000 a year. Part of this is being met by the sale of gold and foreign securities to the United States and part by the accumulation and investment in London of funds belonging to countries in the sterling area. Both these processes can continue for some time, but the need to replace the lost Continental markets by other overseas markets remains. We must, indeed, expect shortly to reach a situation in which a new export drive essential to our existence and to the financing of our large American purchases will come into collision with the interests of important American exporting groups. The United States is not yet prepared to consider the granting of credits to finance our war purchases from her, and those purchases can therefore only be paid for out of existing reserves of foreign securities and gold, which, though large, are not inexhaustible. We should prepare in advance to meet this situation. Failing credits, we must sell and we can only sell in markets where we are bound to compete with American manufacturers who are themselves anxious to secure as much as possible of a restricted world demand. Co-operation between the two countries having perhaps as its objective some agreement on export quotas is therefore obviously sensible. Without understanding and co-operation there is bound to be friction which will aid Nazi propaganda.

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